THE PROBLEM OF POLYGAMY

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PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

THIS booklet appears by kind permission of the author of some articles which appeared in *In Leisure Hours* a few years ago, of which it is an exact reprint, and which at the time aroused a considerable amount of interest. Some publication on the Problem of Polygamy has been a long-felt need, and while the present one does not pretend to be in any way a full or exhaustive treatment of what is in Tropical Africa a subject of great practical importance, it may prove of value particularly to teachers and Christian workers in Nigeria and perhaps elsewhere, who will, I trust, give it their careful study and find it useful for purposes of instruction.

B. LASBREY,
Bishop on the Niger.

POLYGAMY is the status of a man who has more than one wife, and of a woman who has more than one husband. The term polygamy thus includes polygyny, by which is meant the condition of a man with more than one wife, and polyandry, which term is used of a woman with more than one husband. The term cannot be correctly applied to a man with only one proper or legal wife, who has also concubines or mistresses, whether free women or slaves, or to a woman who, having one husband, is the mistress of another man or other men, whether married or single ; such are profligates and not polygamists. The writer calls to mind a talk he had years ago with a professing Christian who violently defended the right of polygamist men to full membership in the Christian Church. The man was not a full member of his Church, for living in the house with himself and his wife were some of his children, begotten by another woman or other women to whom he was not married. This man was not a polygamist, but such as he are frequently the self-appointed champions of polygamy, and are most violent in their abuse of those who uphold strict views on the subject of Christian marriage.

We propose to discuss the subject in the light of the past, and as seen in the present day, and finally to see what the future fate of polygamy is likely to be.

Turning to the past, we must consider polygamy (*a*) in Old Testament times, (*b*) in New Testament times, and (*c*) in the Christian Church. As these articles are intended solely for those who profess and call themselves Christians, we are not concerned with polygamy among the Romans or the Greeks, nor with the teaching of Mohammed, nor with the customs of our ancestors before the introduction of Christianity.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE subject of polygamy has been a controversial one in Church circles in Nigeria for many years. The establishment of the independent "Native African Church" in Lagos in the year 1891 brought the question still more prominently forward, for that Church from the first permitted the baptism of polygamists, admitted them to full membership, appointed them office holders in the Church, and opened the ministry of the Church to them. Since then quite a number of similar Churches have been founded, the majority of which do not place polygamists under any disability whatever. One of these Churches put forward the following proposition in its preliminary circular dealing with its establishment and policy: "Monogamy or Polygamy is not penalised. On the question of marriage it is held that no nation has any right whatever to impose its own forms of marriage upon another nation."

Pamphlets in defence of the practice of polygamy by Christians were published, lectures were given, and controversies carried on in the local press. For some years the pro-polygamy party had matters very much their own way; the pamphlets remained unanswered and the lectures were not replied to. This was not due to any doubt on the part of the older Churches as to the practice of polygamy being non-Christian, or to any feeling of uncertainty as to the catholicity of admitting only monogamists to full Church member-

ship. It was rather the result of knowing the new cult to be unscriptural and non-Catholic. "The very fact that authority could previously rely on itself led to the neglect of its own defences."

The time came, however, when for the sake of the Churches founded in the interior districts, as well as for the sake of the rising generation, it became necessary to state clearly and to publish widely the reasons why the practice of polygamy ought not to be tolerated within the boundaries of the Christian Church. With this end in view a series of articles, in the Yoruba language, was published in *In Leisure Hours*, a monthly magazine published by the Church Missionary Society at the C.M.S. Bookshop, Lagos. Later, another series was published in the same magazine, this time in English. The latter series called forth a rejoinder from the Native African Church, published in the columns of a monthly paper issued by them and called *The African Hope*. These replies were not always coherent, and at times descended to methods of personal abuse, but it was deemed advisable to reply to them, as far as they dealt with the facts of the case. These replies were published in *In Leisure Hours* in a series of articles entitled "To Our Critics." They were followed by a further series, containing extracts from the writings of the great African theologian, Tertullian, one of the early fathers, who wrote a treatise "On Polygamy."

The significance of the writings of Tertullian lies in the fact that the defenders of polygamy persist in blaming European Christianity for the insistence on monogamy which obtains in the Christian Church to-day. Further, one writer has called Tertullian as a witness in favour of polygamy for Christians. His words are as follows: "In his treatise against Hermogenes he distinctly calls Holy Scripture 'the rule of faith.' Elsewhere he says, 'Nothing is certain

respecting it, because the Scripture does not declare it.'" The context requires that "it" shall be understood as referring to polygamy, but Tertullian was quite certain, as these extracts prove, that the Scripture declared against polygamy in such a way as to put polygamists outside the pale of the Christian Church.

The first series of articles in English was published in booklet form in 1925, under the title, "The Problem of Polygamy," with a Preface by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Lasbrey, D.D., Bishop on the Niger. This was only intended as a tentative edition, until the original articles could be revised and made more suitable for general circulation, and the criticisms and replies, as well as the concluding series, incorporated in one volume. This is now sent forth with the earnest hope and prayer that it will help seeking souls to a right solution of the problem discussed.

The writer would like to place on record the fact that his study of this subject in the Word of God was undertaken with the expectation of finding some support in the Old Testament for polygamy, and his surprise at finding that even there the case against polygamy amounted invariably to a condemnation of it either in theory or in practice, and sometimes in both. In no single instance is polygamy commended, and the fruits of polygamy, if any are shown, always constitute a solemn warning against such a deviation from things as they were "in the beginning."

The writer would be grateful for contributions throwing further light on this subject. Correspondence sent to the publishers will be forwarded.

LAGOS, 1926.

THE PROBLEM OF POLYGAMY

CHAPTER I

Polygamy and the Old Testament

POLYGAMY in Old Testament times is first for our consideration. "In the beginning," was the test Christ applied to the question of divorce, and it was a fair test. If we want to know whether the water of a river is good we must test it at the source, and not at the mouth, for in its course all sorts of pollution may be thrown into it. The polluted stream is not the true river. It is unfair to appeal to Solomon—whose excess in matrimonial adventures it is impossible to excuse—for the Old Testament ideal of marriage, for by that time the ideal had been considerably lowered. The ideal will be found by asking, "What was it in the beginning?"

Twice man started out as a monogamous being, once at the Creation, and once after the flood, and in both cases God Himself gave man the start. Dr. Bruce writes: "In the book of Genesis marriage is held to be an indissoluble tie that cannot be broken. The woman is made to be an helpmeet for man, and is regarded as having all the rights and privileges of a free personality. Gen. i. 27 and ii. 21-23 are the *loci classici* of the sexual relations, and there we find that

marriage is no result of mere sensual feeling, but a God-given institution. Eve is taken from the side of Adam, and husband and wife stand to each other in the nearest relations. One woman is given to one man, and polygamy is not recognised." In the days of Noah, before the flood, God said, "I will destroy man . . . for it repenteth Me that I have made them," and at that time polygamy was common among men. At the flood God destroyed polygamy with all those who followed the custom, and saved only Noah and his family who were all monogamists. It has been objected that "monogamy alone could never have fulfilled God's plan of the world as contained in the words 'be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth.'" Yet it is a well-known fact that polygamy, as compared with monogamy, does not produce more offspring, but rather less. If God's plan could not succeed without polygamy, it would be interesting to know why God, at the beginning, gave only one wife to Adam, and why God chose a monogamous family to replenish the earth after the flood!

If the polygamy of antediluvian times had been a natural development of the monogamy of Adam, and a stage in man's progress, God surely would not have destroyed it. By reverting to the old order of things, God's approval of monogamy is plainly implied, and by calling attention to conditions which obtained at the beginning and putting that forward as the criterion of conduct, Christ has set His seal upon monogamy, and it necessarily follows that He has thus thrown the weight of His authority against polygamy. It is not claimed that God destroyed the world because it had become largely polygamous, or that Noah and his family were saved just because they were monogamists. Nothing more is claimed than that the adoption of polygamy was one sign of the wholesale moral decadence which led to the destruction of the world, and that the

monogamy of Noah and his family was a sign that they had kept themselves from the evil of their day and generation.

One thoughtful writer has written thus about Old Testament polygamy: "I regard all the cases quoted in the Old Testament as inapplicable to Christianity in the nineteenth century, and the pages of the New Testament as silent; but the words, 'Male and female created He them,' 'In the beginning it was not so,' seem to govern the whole matter, and to forbid imperatively the admission of polygamy in any form into the Christian Church."

Yet still Old Testament examples of polygamy are brought forward again and again by those who wish to see polygamists accepted by the Christian Church for baptism. We do not admit the argument thus advanced. A *Jew* might claim to be allowed to have several wives on the ground that Abraham, David, and Solomon had, but such a claim could be made only by a *Christian* who had failed to grasp the essentials of Christianity, and who either ignorantly or wilfully overlooked the differences between Judaism and Christianity. Christ told the Pharisees that Moses suffered them to put away their wives *because of the hardness of their hearts* and not because it was good or right, and He added, "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and shall marry another, committeth adultery" (Matt. xix. 8, 9). To claim that because a custom was permitted in Old Testament days, it is right for a Christian to adopt it, in the face of this and other kindred passages in the New Testament, is to forfeit the right to be called a follower of Jesus Christ. To argue thus is to argue in favour of a number of things which were done by Old Testament characters which are obviously wrong, yet which were not expressly spoken against by God at the time. Slave-owners, for example, would be quite as much

entitled to full membership in the Christian Church as polygamists, if we adopt this line of argument. Surely West Africa is the last place in the world where principles should be adopted which would admit slave-owners into the Christian brotherhood!

The ignorance which "God winked at" in the early days of mankind, is no excuse for those who live in these latter days.

> "New occasions teach new duties,
> Time makes ancient good uncouth;
> They must up and ever onward
> Who would keep abreast of truth."

It is not to be expected that God's disapproval of polygamy would lead to every polygamist being rebuked by Him for his manner of life. St. Paul sums up God's attitude to men who persist in a wrong course of conduct, by saying, "God gave them up" and "God gave them over" to what they had deliberately chosen. Just as the natural man turned again and again from the worship of God to the worship of idols, he also turned from the ideal of marriage as instituted in the Garden of Eden, to the polygamy which his flesh desired and "God gave man up" to that which he had deliberately chosen. But the call to repentance, of which St. Paul speaks, came to the Jewish race, for polygamy ceased from among the Jews, with very rare exceptions, before the time of Christ. After Christ, polygamy was not tolerated in the Christian Church, and it would be the highest presumption to think we can escape the displeasure of God by pleading that ignorance at which God aforetime winked, for such ignorance does not exist among Christians to-day, even among those of the second and third generation in lands recently evangelised.

A defender of polygamy, who maintains that it is quite lawful for Christians of to-day to be polygamists,

in criticising the views advanced in the articles which form the basis of this book, wrote :

" Talk of God's plan for the world, has it even occurred to the writer of the article under review the why and wherefore Adam's punishment was relegated to a life of perpetual labour and care as contained in the Creator's words, ' In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread ' ? It was to keep in due subjection in him those passions and appetites to gratify which he had transgressed the Divine command." We answer that there is another fact in this connection, which the critic seems to have overlooked. The demand for the Christian Church to tolerate polygamy comes chiefly from those who do *not* eat their bread in the sweat of their brow, but who live sedentary lives, who are largely their own masters, and work or not as they please, or, if employed by others, work much shorter hours than those who eat their bread in the sweat of the brow. An increase in the sweat of the brow would mean a decrease in polygamy which gives more license to gratification of passions and appetites than does monogamy. Further than this, it is not without significance that the adoption of polygamy was followed by the introduction of arts and crafts which took man away from the particular work God had given to Adam for the very purpose, according to the critic, of enabling him to conquer his passions and appetites.

We are also told why Lamech adopted polygamy. " Undoubtedly, he being intensely devotional, and disgusted with the monogamic polyplastic of defrauding husbands of those days sought a new remedy in polygamy and the peculiar intellectual endowments given to his offsprings by the Creator may be taken as His assent to the course adopted." While sorry to doubt what the critic says is " undoubted," there is every reason to doubt him, and he advances no satisfactory

reason in support of his theory. The only men in those days whose intense devotion we are sure about were Abel, who was killed before he could marry, Enoch, a monogamist "who walked with God," and Noah who was saved in the flood, and who also was a monogamist. Was it devotion on Lamech's part, that he confessed to his wives, "I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt"? This sounds more like murder than devotion. There is not one tittle of evidence of Lamech's devotion—it is purely imagination—unless the critic takes the Lamech of Gen. v. 28 to be same as the Lamech of Gen. iv. 19, which is not the case. It is interesting to note that Enoch who walked with God was the sixth generation from Adam through Seth, while Lamech was the sixth generation from Adam through Cain. The "walk with God" of Enoch and the polygamy of Lamech suggest that a contrast is intended by the sacred historian. Eve, when she bare Seth, said, "For God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew," and the Bible says, "men began to call upon the name of the Lord" after the birth of Enoch, the son of Seth, all implying that Cain's seed, including Lamech, partook of the character of Cain, while Seth's seed followed righteous Abel. Jude also bears this out when he says that "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and all of their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage." Lamech was of the same generation as Enoch, and Lamech's first wife bore him two sons, so

that he did not adopt polygamy because his wife was childless. May not Enoch have been thinking of Lamech when he spoke of "walking after their own lusts"? Enoch and Lamech were only of the fourth generations before Noah, and at the time of Noah, God saw that "the wickedness of man was great in the earth." Part of this wickedness was that "the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." The critic quotes Kitto: "Lamech had a daughter Naamah (which denotes fair and beautiful)." So Lamech's fair daughter, born in a polygamous household, was one of the daughters of men who tempted the sons of God! By the latter (sons of God) is meant the family of Seth, who were professedly religious, by the former (daughters of men) the descendants of Apostate Cain. Everything points to the continued wickedness of the family of Cain, and to the continued righteousness of the family of Seth. Lamech, the first polygamist, was of the family of Cain, but Enoch, Noah, and Christ were of the family of Seth. Lamech was *not* intensely devotional, or even devotional in the smallest degree, he had not the usual excuse which is advanced for taking a second wife—the childlessness of his first wife—and he was one of those whom Enoch described as "walking after their own lusts." To say that Lamech was "disgusted with the monogamic polyplastic of defrauding husbands of those days" and so "sought a new remedy in polygamy" is unscriptural, unlikely to the last degree, and such evidence as exists is all against any such theory. Why suggest in defence of Lamech the hypocritical excuse with which men to-day try to silence the accusing conscience when they adopt polygamy to satisfy their own lusts?

On a level with all the foregoing is the claim that "the peculiar intellectual endowments given to

Lamech's offsprings by the Creator may be taken as His assent to the course adopted," viz. polygamy. Has our critic never read what David said, "I saw the prosperity of the wicked," or what Job said, "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? . . . They rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth," or the promise of Satan to give to Christ "All the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them" if He would "fall down and worship him." We suggest that the cleverness of Lamech's family may be as much or as little a proof of wickedness as of righteousness, and as likely to be the gift of Satan as the gift of God. Are the men we know who are specially intellectual the most devotional, and those whose disgust at sin is the most pronounced? The question is its own answer.

It may, however, be claimed that to leave the question of Old Testament polygamy here, is to evade a difficulty instead of facing it. It will be well, therefore, to make a brief survey of a number of Old Testament characters, including most of the cases which are usually advanced by the defenders of polygamy, to see whether they encourage or discourage polygamy. "By their fruits ye shall know them." If the fruits are good, the tree is good, but if the fruits are bad the tree is bad. Writing of polygamy Dr. Cust says: "It was the curse which toppled dynasties and ruined families, from the day that Abraham banished Ishmael to clear the prospects of Isaac, from the day that the feasting of Adonijah at En-rogel, beneath Mount Moriah, was interrupted by the cries of 'God save King Solomon!' from the valley of Gihon under the heights of Mount Zion." Is this claim borne out by the facts? Let us turn to the Old Testament and examine the lives of some of the leading men, including the two named by Dr. Cust.

Adam, the first man, and Noah, who was saved

from the flood, were both monogamists. "Lamech, the first polygamist, was a descendant of Cain, who founded a civilisation of city-building, music and mechanical arts without any recognition of God, whose authority he had repudiated, and polygamy, which, like other sins, God endured but never approved, was in direct opposition to His law." (Dr. A. C. Dixon.)

Abraham is the first notable man in Bible history who adopted polygamy. Sarah, his wife, was barren, and she gave to her husband, Hagar, her maid, to be his wife in the hope that he might become the father of a child by her. Yet God had repeatedly promised Canaan to Abraham's seed before this, and it was faithlessness on the part of both that led to this—Sarah was faithless in suggesting it, and Abraham was equally faithless in agreeing to it. "It was a wrong step," says Dr. Jamieson, "indicating a want of simple reliance on God, and Sarah was the first to reap the bitter fruits of her device." In other words, Abraham's polygamy was the evil fruit of which faithlessness was the seed. Hagar, when she conceived, despised Sarah, and Sarah retaliated by such harsh treatment as drove Hagar to flee into the wilderness. After the birth of Isaac, Hagar's son was seen by Sarah to be mocking Isaac, and Sarah insisted on Hagar and Ishmael—the "bond woman and her son" as Sarah scornfully called them —being cast out. "The thing was grievous in the sight of Abraham," and so he also reaped the bitter fruits of his wrong act. It has been argued that because Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar, fulfilled his destiny and became the father of twelve princes, and of offspring as the sand of the seashore, therefore Abraham's polygamy was justified. This is to claim that the end justifies the means, which is quite unjustifiable, whereas it is really a proof of God's mercy and grace.

Isaac was a monogamist. "Though tried in a

similar way to his father, he did not follow the same crooked policy. Twenty years he continued unblessed with offspring, but in answer to their mutual prayers Rebekah was divinely informed that she was to be the mother of twins, who should be the progenitors of two independent nations." Jacob, however, followed his grandfather, and not his father, and married first two wives, and others afterwards.

It is worth noticing here that the practice of Jacob, who took two sisters to wife, is forbidden by Lev. xviii. 18: "Thou shalt not take a woman to her sister, to be a rival to her . . . in her lifetime." Dr. Ryder Smith points out that this text frankly admits the evil rivalry that inevitably follows polygamy. What a sordid picture we have of the domestic jealousies of the household of Jacob! What happiness could there be in such a home? No wonder that Jacob, in talking to Pharaoh said, "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been." An attempt has been made to disprove the domestic jealousies of Jacob's family by pointing out that eleven of Jacob's sons united to deceive their father, and it is claimed that such unity excludes the possibility of jealousy! Against this false view it is only necessary to point out that it was jealousy of one which united the other eleven, and that in some at least of the eleven it was *murderous* jealousy. Acts viii. 9 (R.V.) is quite conclusive as to the jealousy which existed in Jacob's family. For the jealousy which polygamy invariably brings into a household, we look—and never look in vain—to the several wives of one husband, rather than to the children of those several wives. In Jacob's case we find the jealousy among the children as well. No wonder that Joseph, with such an example before him, was a monogamist. Moses, the law-giver, was also a monogamist. The attitude of Moses himself towards polygamy has been well stated as follows: "Under the Law polygamy is

not condemned, but its evil consequences are mitigated to a large degree by several enactments." (Dr. W. S. Bruce.)

Samuel was born of a polygamist father, but his story opens with an account of the troubles in the house of Elkanah, his father, caused by his two wives, Hannah who at that time was barren, and Peninnah who provoked Hannah sore for to make her fret. In answer to Hannah's prayer Samuel was born. "Domestic broils in the houses of polygamists are of frequent occurrence," says one commentator, and it is a fair comment on the story of Samuel's parents.

It has been said by a defender of polygamy, that "No further evidence of God's approval of polygamy is required than in Elkanah's case. In answer to Hannah's prayer, Samuel was born." It is worth pointing out that the prayer was Hannah's and not Elkanah's. It is surely claiming too much, to try and prove that when God answers the prayer of a wife, He necessarily justifies her husband in some course of action he has taken. Also this again is claiming that the end justifies the means, a very dangerous claim to make. Elkanah had only two wives, yet one is called in Scripture the "adversary" of the other. Because of the conduct of one wife, the other, Hannah, "wept" and "refused to eat" and "her heart was grieved." Even her prayer was uttered while she was "in bitterness of soul" and she described herself to Eli as "a woman of a sorrowful spirit." All these are the bitter fruits of polygamy, and attributable to polygamy alone.

Samuel himself was probably a monogamist, and became the father of two sons.

David's polygamy next claims our attention. David's first wife was Michal, the daughter of Saul, but after her marriage with David she was given by Saul to Phalti, the son of Laish. After the

death of Saul, when David waxed strong against the house of Saul, David sent to Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, demanding the return of Michal, his wife, and in accordance with this demand, Ishbosheth took her from Phalti and sent her to David. Phalti at first went along with Michal, but Abner sent him back again. After Michal was taken away from David by Saul, David married Abigail, the widow of Nabal, and Ahinoam of Jezreel, and thus became a polygamist. Later David married other women, the ones mentioned by name in Scripture being Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur, and Haggith, and Abital, and Eglah. Still later the sacred historian says that "David took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem after he was come from Hebron." Even yet David was not satisfied, and after he had treacherously compassed the death of Uriah the Hittite, David sent and fetched Bathsheba, the wife of the murdered man, with whom he had previously committed adultery, and "she became his wife." So David had eight wives who are mentioned by name, and other wives and concubines whose names are not given.

David, whose matrimonial history is briefly given above, is an example often quoted by those who defend polygamy, as a godly man whose polygamy was not expressly condemned, but some even go further and claim that his polygamy was actually approved by God, through the mouth of Nathan the prophet. It is, of course, admitted by all that David's adultery with Bathsheba was condemned by God and that punishment followed the evil deed. The verse quoted in support of the claim that God approved of David's polygamy, is 2 Sam. xii. 8, "And I (God) gave thee thy master's house and thy master's wives into thy bosom, . . . and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things." There is no proof, however, that David took even one

of his master's wives to be his own wife. Had he done so it would almost certainly have been mentioned. We have no proof even that Saul was a polygamist, though he may have been, for the morality of the times gave its sanction to the practice. The verse quoted above is certainly nothing more than a figure of speech to emphasise the fact that God had given to David, as king of Israel, everything that had belonged to his predecessor. "The history," says an old writer, "furnishes conclusive evidence that he never married any of the wives of Saul. But the harem of the preceding king belongs, according to Oriental notions, as a part of the regalia, to his successor." This Oriental custom is not unknown in the Yoruba country, but it is well known that, in many cases, inherited wives remain wives in name only. The assumption that such was the case with David is greatly strengthened by David's marriage to Saul's daughter. David certainly did not take the mother of Michal, his wife, to be an additional wife, for that was as contrary to the Mosaic law as was his adultery with Bathsheba, and would hardly have been passed over in silence by the sacred writers. It is almost as unlikely that he took any other of Saul's wives, if such there were. Nathan's words are, then, nothing more than a figure of speech, and cannot be fairly used either for or against the custom of polygamy. It is perhaps worthy of note that Nathan does *not* say, "I would moreover have given unto thee *other wives*," but says "I would have given thee *such and such things*." This silence as to the particular things is perhaps significant, and reminds us of a somewhat similar instance in the New Testament. In Mark x. 29, 30, we read: "And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, . . . for My sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold . . . houses, and

brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands." There is no promise that a man who has given up a wife for Christ's sake and the Gospel's shall receive a hundred-fold in wives! May it not be that both Nathan's and Christ's words were chosen deliberately, so as to prevent any mistake on the question of polygamy? The natural conclusion of Nathan's words would have been "I would have given unto thee *other wives*," and that would certainly have implied Divine permission for polygamy, but the words were *not* used. If the verse tells any way on the question of polygamy it tells *against* rather than in favour of the practice. Against this view it has been argued that "the words of Nathan leave the impression that 'such and such things' may mean 'more and more wives,' in fact, considering the nature of the argument, no other inference could be drawn." On the contrary, Nathan was too familiar with "The Law" to have made such a glaring error as that would have been. Deut. xvii. 17 contains the command, "Neither shall he (the king) multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away." Nathan knew better than to deliver a message purporting to come from God which would so plainly contradict God's law. The God who spake by Nathan would not contradict the God who spake by Moses, for He is the same God, the God who is not a man that He should lie.

The Scriptures have little to say about the domestic affairs of David; we have no record of quarrelling wives, or of family jealousy until David was old and stricken in years, when "Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king." This Adonijah was Absalom's younger brother and the eldest living son of David and must have been aware of his father's arrangement, made under direct guidance from God, that Solomon should inherit the throne. Thus King David's closing years were clouded by rivalry between

two of his sons born of different mothers, a direct outcome of his polygamous life. But there are other and earlier glimpses of the family of David which show that his family life was not by any means a happy one. The lust of Amnon, David's firstborn, the murder of Amnon by Absalom his half-brother, Absalom's rebellion followed by his adultery with his father's concubines, and the death of Absalom, are all events speaking loudly of the sadness of David's home-life. Conformity with the polygamous customs of his own day did not bring to David happiness and joy in the home. While we do not claim that these events are directly, or even indirectly, the result of David's polygamy, they serve to show that polygamy is not the "cure-all" for domestic trials which its advocates sometimes try to make it out to be. It may also be pointed out that the addition of one wife, Bathsheba, to David's family, was certainly the result of sensuality —lust was the seed, and one step deeper into polygamy was the fruit.

A criticism of the above point of view reads as follows: "In all that was said about David's matrimonial history we agree only in the condemnation of his adultery and maintain that since the morality of the times gave its sanction to polygamy we think it uneconomical to waste further ink on an unnecessary argument." This is no argument, however, in favour of the continuance of polygamy. A century ago, in the town from which the critic wrote, the "morality of the times" permitted human sacrifice. Annually a young girl was impaled alive on a stake as an offering to a particular heathen deity. The writer of the criticism would not defend such an action to-day. The morality of those times has passed away before the spread of Christianity and civilisation, and the morality of to-day is a very different thing. Slavery was a most lucrative trade in that town a century ago, and

the morality of the times permitted the trade. The man who claims the right to perpetuate that trade to-day because it was in accordance with the morality of a century ago, would have to take the severe consequences of his folly.

"In the East," says Dr. Ryder Smith, "to possess a numerous harem has always been a mark of royal magnificence. Saul seems to have escaped the tyranny of this evil, but David succumbed to it. . . . No doubt the fiction was maintained that the harem was meant to secure the king an heir, but David added to his wives after the birth of several sons. The pitiful story of his later Court—of Amnon, of Absalom, of Adonijah—is just a study in the harem. . . . The rulers no doubt imitated the royal example of polygamy and concubinage, and these uses, perhaps for the first time, became common in Israel. The poor man, though in practice he could only afford one wife, would think of the ownership of many as a desirable thing. Probably the institution of the Monarchy delayed the evolution of the esteem of monogamy in Israel for centuries."

"Further, the harem always tends to give a woman a false ambition. The luxury of the royal wives, and their real, though indirect influence at Court, makes a position there the secret desire of many who can never attain it, and to be the toy of a rich man's lust becomes a girl's ambition. The idleness and luxury of the Hebrew Court ladies and that child of these two, their cruelty, appears in more than one typical passage. Amos' delineation of them is typical: 'Ye cows of Bashan that are in the mountains of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say unto their lords, Bring and let us drink.' This is a normal nemesis of the harem."

These words should be pondered by anyone who thinks David's polygamy a suitable example for

Christians to follow. Dr. Ryder Smith sums up this part of his study of the treatment of the women of that period with these weighty words: "A nation's treatment of women goes far to make or mar its destiny. The Hebrew Monarchy degraded her; the revenge was Jezebel."

Of Solomon's grossly extravagant polygamy it is unnecessary to write at length. Few would defend, as few would follow, such a life, for we are told that Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. But it is claimed by some that the choice of Solomon, a younger son by a later wife, in preference to the firstborn son, to be king in the room of David his father is a proof that God approved of David's polygamy and regarded his subsequent marriages as real marriages. Such a claim goes too far. David's first wife was childless (2 Sam. vi. 23), but he had married several other wives before that period of his life to which this text relates. His successor was necessarily the child of a polygamous marriage, there having been no child by his first marriage, unless one out of another family altogether had been chosen. It would be as logical to claim that God approved of adultery and murder because He allowed the child of adulterers and of a murderer to ascend his father's throne and prospered him as a king, as it is to argue in favour of polygamy because the son of David, a polygamist, succeeded his father.

It is claimed by one writer that rivalry such as rent the royal house of David, is inseparable from royalty, apart altogether from the life led by the reigning monarch, and that to blame polygamy for it in the case of the house of David is to blackmail polygamy. Rivalry may be inseparable from royalty, but the fact remains that where a king has only one wife and children by that wife alone, the true successor to the throne is never in doubt, where the throne is hereditary. Any rival to the eldest son of a deceased monarch is

either a pretender or an usurper. The question of succession in the case of Queen Victoria and King Edward the Seventh, was never in doubt, neither is there any doubt as to the rightful successor to King George the Fifth! Solomon was David's *tenth* son, and Adonijah had a prior claim to the throne, reckoned by seniority. David said (1 Chron. xxii. 9, 10) that God promised him a son, whose name should be Solomon, who should be established on the throne of David. This promise was apparently made before Absalom's rebellion (*cf.* 2 Sam. vii. with 2 Sam. xv.). As Absalom was an older son than Solomon, and his mother a senior wife to Bathsheba, it is hardly to be wondered at that he tried to secure the throne for himself, as he would consider he had a greater claim than Solomon. Nor is it to be wondered at that Adonijah, after the death of Absalom, for the same reasons, tried to secure the throne for himself. This rivalry *is* directly attributable to David's polygamy, whatever may be said to the contrary. Even the sacred historian points out in explanation of Adonijah's exaltation of himself to the throne, that Adonijah was born after Absalom (1 Kings i. 6) thus giving him a claim to the throne; and the fact that Joab, and Abiathar the priest, were on the side of Adonijah showed that they recognised his claim to the throne. So complicated was the question of the succession to the throne, saving only for God's choice of Solomon, that David had to be appealed to ere the question could be settled.

God's choice of Solomon is really a proof of Divine goodness and grace. Nathan said to David, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin," and the choice of Solomon is a wonderful evidence of God's forgiveness and His boundless grace. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." God certainly did not approve of *Solomon's* polygamy for "his wives turned

away his heart after other gods ; and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God . . . and the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned away from the Lord God of Israel." The result of polygamy in Solomon's case is plain enough.

We are not aware of any other instances of Old Testament polygamy which call for attention.

There is, however, a book in the Old Testament which deals largely with this question of polygamy versus monogamy, and which is a strong plea for monogamy as the more excellent way. The Song of Songs deals with the desire of two men to obtain as wife the same woman, called in the poem " the Shulammite." These two men were (1) Solomon, the king and the possessor of a harem containing wives and concubines, and (2) a shepherd. " The charms of the palace are depicted and the glories of a monarch's principal bride ; the enchantment is added that the monarch is Israel's mightiest king, Solomon himself ; yet it is declared that whole-heartedly to love an absent shepherd surpasses it all. Once in set terms the old glory of pre-eminence in the harem is set down : ' There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and maidens without number. My dove, my perfect one is one. . . . The daughters saw her and called her blessed : yea, the queens and the concubines ; and they praised her ' (Song of Songs vi. 8, 9). In other words Solomon is pictured as offering the Shulammite that which both he, and the ladies of his harem, and the old opinion of women, all held a woman's supreme bliss —to be *the one* among a king's many wives. He and they could not understand anything else. But it was refused. The Shulammite remains a village maiden to the end. Nor does her shepherd lover turn out at last to be some princeling in disguise. She and he wander away to the pleasant hills at the close of her temptation, nameless peasants still. Her constancy

is the Bible's assertion that in the true love of man and woman there is that which transcends all things that can be seen. The Song of Songs is the definition of a 'sweetheart'; it is the joyful knell of lust in the home, the charter of the nobility of married love. To the blandishments of a king the simple answer suffices, 'I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me' (Song of Songs vii. 10). 'Love is strong as death' (Song of Songs viii. 6)—how tawdrily a palace dazzles beside this! . . . Lo, home at its highest is no king's monopoly, but the boon of common men. In every true marriage the Shulammite triumphs over Solomon again." These are the words of Dr. Ryder Smith, and he speaks of it as a "supreme achievement" for a race of the ancient East, with its interminable habit of polygamy to produce and canonise such a book as this. "The Old Testament love-song presupposes unawares the principle of the final Christian ideal."

There is another indirect reference to the same subject in the Old Testament. Dr. Bruce points out that the beautiful description in the Book of Proverbs of a good wife seems to imply that monogamy increasingly prevailed in the later days of Judaism, and the New Testament everywhere presupposes it. Certainly the Wise Man's description of the perfect woman assumes monogamy. She was no mere tool for man's lust, neither is she spoken of as the bearer of his children, but as a "help-meet" for him, the home-maker. It is impossible to read into the story any rival wife; she was *the* wife, the *only* wife.

One other point should, however, be noticed before leaving this part of the subject. It has been stated that the children of Israel were polygamist throughout the Old and New Testament times. Dr. Cust takes an entirely opposite view. He writes: "My own view is that of Michaelis (Law of Moses, iii. 5), that subsequent to the Babylonish Captivity,

polygamy did not exist. I challenge anyone to produce an instance of the practice, or a passage inferring the practice, in the Apocrypha, or any Greek or Roman author ; the only instance on record is that of Herod the Great mentioned by Josephus."

The opinion of Dr. Bruce has been quoted above. Dr. Ryder Smith thinks that polygamy was not common in Israel at any time. "How far polygamy prevailed in Israel is not known, for it is a practice that may be both lawful and rare. The great majority of Hindus, for instance, are monogamists. The 1901 census of India gave only eight polygamists among every thousand married Hindus. The story of Eden suggests that in Israel monogamy was normal, and the story of Jacob that the family of a first bride sometimes demanded that she should have 'no rival' (Gen. xxxi. 50). Still there were Israelites, whether many or few, who followed the example of Abraham and Jacob rather than that of Isaac, and practised polygamy."

There are still those who, while calling themselves Christians, seem persuaded that polygamy is consistent with Christianity, just because polygamy was adopted by some of the saints of Old Testament times. The man who has persuaded himself that such a conclusion is right, is welcome to his conclusion—and to its probable consequences ! If he follow the example of Abraham he is also welcome to the quarrelling of his Sarah and his Hagar ; if he follow the example of Jacob, he is welcome to see the murderous hate of his older sons for his younger and best beloved son by another wife ; if he follow Elkanah, he is welcome to the bitter tears and hunger-strike of his beloved Hannah as she is provoked day by day by his Penninah ; if he follow David he is welcome to the rebellion of his Absalom and to the bitter cry of anguish, "Would God that I had died for thee, O Absalom my son" ; he is also

welcome, as he comes to die, to the discordant cries of the rival parties contending as did Solomon and Adonijah for his throne; if he follow Solomon he is welcome, in the weakness of his old age, to try and resist the blandishments of numerous wives, many of them youthful and attractive no doubt, as they would turn away his heart from God at the last.

The wise Christian will leave his father and mother and cleave to his *wife;* that the *twain* may become one flesh (Christ, quoted in Matt. xix. 5), and both time and eternity will show which of the two, the polygamist or the monogamist, has chosen the better part which shall not be taken away.

CHAPTER II

Polygamy and the New Testament

THE advocates of polygamy build much upon the fact that the New Testament contains no prohibition of polygamy except possibly the one instance where it says that "a Bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife." They maintain that the whole world in New Testament times, Jewish and Gentile alike, was polygamous and from the silence of the New Testament regarding this universal custom, they conclude that primitive Christianity was in favour of the custom, or at least saw no moral harm in it. So one of these writers says, "Christ Himself was altogether silent in respect to polygamy, not once alluding to it, yet it was practised at the time of His advent throughout Judæa and Galilee, and in all the countries of Asia and Africa, and without doubt by some of His disciples. The Book of the Acts is equally silent as the four Gospels are. And this uniform silence, so far as it implies anything, implies approval. John the Baptist was thrown into prison, where he was afterwards beheaded, for reproving King Herod of his adultery: and we cannot doubt, that if he had considered polygamy to be sinful, he would have mentioned it; for Herod's father was, just before that time, living with nine wives, but John only reproved him for marrying Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, while his brother was living."

The fallacy of such arguments is very patent. The

silence of the New Testament on the question of polygamy only "implies approval" *if* polygamy was a recognised custom in those days. So to take full advantage of this line of argument the advocates of polygamy assert what they entirely fail to prove, viz. that polygamy was a wide-spread custom. But if it can be proved that polygamy was so exceptional as not to call forth any direct or indirect reference to it in any of the books of the New Testament, the argument rather works the other way, and is in favour of monogamy. The writer quoted above produces one instance of polygamy from those days, but overlooks the fact that it is the only recorded instance to be found in contemporary history, whether sacred or profane, and that its singularity is the cause of its notoriety. His attempt to make capital out of John the Baptist's failure to rebuke Herod the Tetrarch for the polygamy of his father, Herod the Great, is ludicrous. The record we have of John's message to Herod is contained in less than a dozen words, and is most probably only a very brief summary of what was said. Further, John's desire was to bring Herod to repentance, and the best way to defeat the object which was doubtless dear to his heart would have been to blame unjustly the son to whom he was speaking for the evil deeds of his father who was dead. The universal abhorrence of Herod the Great's polygamy was apparently sufficiently well known to his son to save him from that particular evil, though he fell grievously into another sin, the sin which the brave Forerunner so fearlessly denounced.

A critic asks: "Is it not most singular that Christ was a descendant of polygamous ancestors, and more too that same has not militated against his capacity to fulfil the work of the redemption of mankind by bruising Satan's head on Calvary?" A little later on considerable space is devoted by the same writer

to Lamech, the first polygamist. To this we reply that Christ's descent from Adam was not through Lamech and the other polygamists of the antediluvian age, but through the monogamists. Lamech was descended from Cain, but Christ from Seth, Cain's younger brother. If Christ had been descended from Cain and Lamech, His polygamous—and murderous—ancestry would have been much more pronounced, but the line of succession was through Seth, Enoch, and Noah, and so far as there is any information on the subject at all, it goes to prove that all His antediluvian ancestors were monogamists. It would be more correct, historically, to emphasise His monogamous than His polygamous ancestry. The second part of the question is easily dealt with. Is it not most singular that Christ was descended from Judah, who was guilty of gross immorality, and from David and Bathsheba, adulterers, and from people guilty of most of the other sins contained in the decalogue, and yet this did not militate against His capacity to fulfil the work of redemption? If the critic fits polygamy into the plan of God for the world *because* Christ was descended from polygamists, he *must*, to be consistent and logical, fit into the plan immorality and adultery, and all the other evils of which Christ's human ancestors were guilty, and scrap the Ten Commandments! This sort of argument will not convince thoughtful people.

The claim that some of Christ's own disciples were polygamists is devoid of one iota of proof from any source whatever, and the simple fact that a condition of life, so frequently mentioned incidentally in the Old Testament, is neither mentioned nor implied in the New Testament nor can be in any way inferred from anything that is said there, points almost conclusively in the opposite direction. Any unbiassed reader of the New Testament might well conclude that polygamy was almost unknown in those days, in the countries

where the writers lived and worked, as well as in those places to which their writings were sent. And this conclusion is backed up by reliable evidence. Dr. Edersheim, a converted Jew, writes in "Sketches of Jewish Social Life" as follows: "It is impossible to read the Old and still more the New Testament without gathering from it the conviction that polygamy was not the rule but the rare exception, so far as the people generally were concerned. . . . What the religious views and feelings both about divorce and monogamy were at the time of Malachi, appears from the pathetic description of the altar of God as covered with the tears of 'the wife of thy youth,' 'the wife of thy covenant,' 'thy companion' who had been 'put away' or 'treacherously dealt with' (Mal. ii. 13 to end)."

An example of the rarity of polygamy in a country where the custom is sanctioned, is to found among the Yorubas of a former generation. Dr. O. Johnson in "The History of the Yorubas" says: "In ancient times the Yorubas were mostly monogamic; not from any enlightened views on the subject, however, but rather from necessity; for, although polygamy was not actually forbidden, yet only rich folk could avail themselves of indulgence in this condition of life." Such was the case with the Jews in pre-Christian times, but when "in the fulness of time" Jesus came the views of the Jews had become enlightened, and polygamy was so rare as to be practically unknown.

Dr. Ryder Smith writes: "As to monogamy, it is well known that the New Testament nowhere declares in set terms that this is to be the Christian rule. Yet it was already the universal custom both of the Jewish and the Greek world. Did Christianity tolerate the polygamy that they forbade? There is here an outstanding instance of the way in which a custom may be so universally taken for granted that it is never asserted. 1 Cor. vii. 2 comes nearest to an assertion.

Usually men do not assert the obvious, but assume it. Again, the Christian use of monogamy, like the Christian custom of 'forbidden degrees,' illustrates the way in which Christianity accepted not a few usages from its environment. In this instance it took over a rule that had not been fully reached even in the latest period of Old Testament life. But, while it borrowed, it always selected what it should borrow."

Again Dr. Cust writes: "Great stress should be laid upon a consideration of the state of the world, as described by Classical Authors, at the time of the appearance of our Lord. The Greek Culture had dominated Western Asia and North Africa, and was perpetuated by their successors, the Romans. Can we doubt that the heroes of the Iliad and the Odyssey, Priam, Hector, Menelaus, Ulysses, Agamemnon were monogamists, not always faithful husbands, but never with two wives lawfully married at the same time? The gods, and goddesses, the creatures of the Greek conception, were monogamists. Palestine, Syria, and Egypt had been thoroughly Hellenised before the advent of our Lord (see 2 Maccabees iv. 10), and the four bad customs (one of which is polygamy) which had prevailed in the elder world . . . had disappeared." The writer first quoted says that polygamy was practised in all the countries of Asia and Africa, but omits Europe. He seems to admit by his omission that such a condition did not obtain in Europe, but Dr. Cust's contention is that the customs of the European Greeks had permeated Palestine, Syria, and Egypt, and that those countries were therefore exceptions to the practice of polygamy prevailing in other parts of Africa and Asia. Palestine, Syria, and Egypt adopted monogamy along with other Greek customs.

The New Testament does not fail to condemn adultery and fornication. The upholders of polygamy claim that these sins are very largely the fault of a

monogamous system of life, and advocate polygamy as a cure for them. "Polygamists have no need to be fornicators," says one writer. Then we may well ask why, if polygamy *is* a cure for fornication, it was not advocated by New Testament writers *as* a cure for fornication? This so-called cure was a custom which prevailed among their forefathers and yet it is never recommended as a help to a pure and holy life. It is more than strange that strong condemnation of adultery and fornication is not accompanied by a word in favour of polygamy, *if* polygamy would save the nation from those sins. There is only one explanation of the omission, and that is that polygamy is no remedy or safeguard, and that it would be but mockery to recommend it. So instead of such a recommendation we have St. Paul's ringing command, "Make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." A recommendation by Christ or an Apostle to Jewish converts to forsake monogamy and to return to the polygamy of their forefathers and save themselves the temptation to commit fornication would have gone a long way towards settling this question, but no such recommendation exists.

In dealing with this passage, a critic makes the following remarkable statement: "'Make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.' But St. Paul tells us in 1 Cor. vii. 7 that he speaks by permission and not by command." In writing thus, 1 Cor. vii. 6 (not verse 7 as stated) is applied to Rom. xiii. 14. This is as gross and flagrant a misquotation and misuse of Scripture as we have ever seen. The defenders of polygamy must be in a bad way to make use of such a method of controversy.

The passage from 1 Tim. iii. 2: "A Bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife," has been variously interpreted, though probably all interpreters agree in thinking that polygamy in a bishop

would be contrary to this command. But that this is not the whole meaning of the passage seems fairly clear. Fausset says: "As polygamy was never allowed among even laymen in the Church, the ancient interpretation that the prohibition here is against polygamy in a candidate bishop is incorrect," and he considers it to be a prohibition against a second marriage. There are three possibilities which may have been in the mind of St. Paul: (*a*) polygamy, (*b*) a second marriage after the death of the first wife, and (*c*) a second marriage following divorce. If, as we maintain, polygamy was not allowed to any in the New Testament Church, bishops, clergy, or laity, the first of these is ruled out. The question of a second marriage after the death of the first wife need not be considered here, as few would seriously put forth this meaning of the text. We are then left to the third interpretation, which seems the true one, viz. that a man whose first wife is living though divorced by him, and has married again, should not be made a bishop. Of course, if he were the guilty party and his wife had obtained a divorce from him because of his adultery, his unfitness for the office of bishop would be sufficiently obvious to render any advice from St. Paul quite unnecessary. At first sight, it may seem rather hard for a man to be refused the office of a bishop if, having divorced his wife on the ground of her adultery, he has married again.

But the Apostle gives a reason for his ruling. He continues: "One that ruleth well his own house . . . (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?)."

A polygamist *might* rule his own house well so that the reason given by the Apostle hardly applies if polygamy is in his mind, but it *does* apply if he was referring to divorce. A wife who gave occasion for her husband to divorce her was either ill-chosen by the

husband, or the house was not well-ruled by the husband. In either case he shares the blame in a sufficient degree to deprive him of preferment to the office of bishop, to which otherwise he might be called. It is easy to see, now, why this is applied to bishops only. A bishop, more than any one else, must be blameless, and his record of life should contain nothing which would cause his people to feel a lack of confidence in his leadership and his ruling of the Church. The C.M.S. Minute on polygamy says, "It is uncertain whether the Apostle refers to polygamy or to the practice condemned by our Saviour, of putting away a wife on unlawful grounds, and marrying another." The writer would suggest that it is not a matter of putting away a wife on *unlawful* grounds and marrying another. The Apostle who says that marriage must be "only in the Lord" (1 Cor. vii. 39) will not excuse the Christian minister the consequences of disobedience to this rule, or free him from blame if his wife becomes a backslider and falls into the sin of adultery. As the head of the house he is held responsible for both wife and children, and if he fails in either respect he must be content to hold a lowly position in the Church. No interpretation of this verse that the writer has seen is so reasonable, and fits in so entirely with the context and with the whole spirit of New Testament teaching, as this. To claim this verse as an implied permission for polygamy to all Christians who are not bishops or ministers is to miss the true meaning of the passage and to make the scripture of private interpretation (2 Peter i. 20). It is possible for people to wrest the Scriptures unto their own destruction (2 Peter iii. 16). Let us go to the Scriptures to find there the will of God, taught by the Holy Spirit, and not looking for the things we want to see or wresting the Scriptures to fit in with our own desires or to square them with the traditions of our forefathers.

In a book published in 1923, three years after the above paragraph was first printed, the writer says: "the phrase, 'the husband of one wife,' probably refers to the wide prevalence of divorce at the time. There would probably be among the early converts a number who, before conversion, had divorced a wife and been married again. These were not to bear office in the Church."

St. Paul's writings bear strong, if indirect testimony to the fact that polygamy was neither tolerated nor thought of in the early Christian Church. It is impossible to reconcile his language in Ephes. v. 22–33 with the statement that polygamy was common in the Church in his day. Apart from the use of the singular "wife," instead of the plural "wives," in verses 23, 28, 31, and 33, the whole argument of the passage would be spoilt by reading the possibility of polygamy into it. One or two examples will illustrate this. The 23rd verse would read, "For the husband is the head of his wives, even as Christ is the head of the churches; and he is the saviour of the body." The 25th and following verses would read, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the churches, and gave Himself for them, that He might sanctify and cleanse them, . . . that He might present them to Himself glorious churches . . . that they should be holy and without blemish . . . He that loveth his wives loveth himself." But from verse 30 the alterations necessary under such circumstances are still more striking: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wives, and they several shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the churches. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wives even as himself; and the wives see that they reverence their husbands."

Christ did not found churches, or die for churches,

but for "the Church," the one true Church. There was only one Church, the Church of the redeemed, the congregation of faithful men. How passionately He prayed for the unity and oneness of those whom God gave Him out of the world—"that they all may be one," "that they may be made perfect in one," and the example of that unity is His own oneness with the Father,—"As Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us" (John xvii.). The Divine unity of Father and Son is our blessed Saviour's illustration of the unity of the believers in one, and the unity of Christ and His united Church is the Apostle's example of the unity which is required of husband and wife. Plurality is excluded from our Saviour's illustration, and from the example the Divinely inspired Apostle gives to his married converts, but the type of which these are the prototypes is claimed to permit of plurality. We cannot, we dare not, read plurality into two of the three. Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father, and He died for His one Church, and His disciples are commanded, if they are husbands, to be joined to their wives as He and His Church are joined on earth and as He and His Father are united in heaven. It is false interpretation, and most illogical to read plurality into the third, and not into the first two. Further than that, husbands are to love their wives with a love strong as death, even as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. He did not die for several churches but for one only because He had only one. What should a polygamist husband do if it became necessary for him to prove his love to the utmost for one of his wives? If the other wives needed his life, and yet for one he ought to die, how should he choose? Such a love can only be for one, and so, contemplating nothing but the union of one man and one woman in the closest and sweetest and most sacred of earthly unions, the Apostle was quite

safe in commanding the Christian husbands of Ephesus to love their wives "even as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it." Wisely and truly does one write, "How could St. Paul have written verse 31 of the fifth chapter of the Ephesians, if the having a plurality of lawful consorts had been a possible conception for the Apostle's mind? He knew very clearly what a harlot was, but an alternative wife did not suggest itself."

In saying this we are, of course, using the word "church" as referring to "All the elect of God of what nation so-ever, from the beginning to the end of the world, who made but one body, whereof Jesus Christ is the Head" (Cruden). One of the Christian Creeds expresses the same truth in the words, "I believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church." In such passages as Gal. i. 22, Rev. i. 4 and Rev. ii. 17, 23, the word "churches" refers to various religious assemblies which are all included in the one true Church. It will hardly be believed that a critic of this contention, shortly after it was published, wrote in a professedly Christian magazine, the following: "As an illustration Christ stands as the Husband, and the different Continental or National Churches His wives, all who become one under the grand tie of Love and jointly and severally call on a common 'Jesus Christ our Lord,' the Lord or Husband of all of us His wives, otherwise we cannot understand how one and two can be one." According to this Rev. xix. 7 would read, "His (the Lamb's) *wives* have made *themselves* ready!" But it does *not* read thus, and that is the end of the matter.

Not only to the Asiatic Church of Ephesus, but to the European Church of Corinth, St. Paul wrote in such a way as to show that the thought of polygamy was entirely absent from his mind. If polygamy had been a possible conception how could he have written

1 Cor. vii. 2–5? Let us test this passage by reading the possibility of polygamy into it. "To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wives, and let every woman have her own husband (or share a husband with other wives). Let the husband render unto his wives due benevolence; and likewise also the wives unto the husband The wives have not power of their own bodies, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife (or wives). Defraud ye not one the other (How shall the wording of this be altered to fit polygamy? We give it up!) except it be with consent for a time." And so we might go on through the chapter to the end. Verse 39 would read, "Wives are bound by the law as long as their husband liveth, but if their husband be dead, they are at liberty to be married to whom they will, only in the Lord." Will not a polygamist, if he have a number of wives, find it difficult to avoid "defrauding" one or another, in the sense in which the Apostle uses the word "defraud"? Even Leah felt she had been defrauded in favour of Rachel by Jacob, although Jacob's wives were limited to four. Here St. Paul might have given some guidance as to the number of wives a man might hope to treat justly and fairly, if polygamy had been present in his mind, but neither by "permission" nor by "commandment" does he mention such a thing. Yet Mohammed did under very similar circumstances. The Quran says, "Take in marriage such as please you, two or three or four, but if ye fear ye cannot act equitably between them, then only one." It is claimed by many enlightened Moslems today that this is equivalent to commanding monogamy, as no man can act equitably to more than one wife. Says one Moslem writer, "No man can be equally loving to four women, and hence, the condition unfulfilled, no man can have more than the one wife he loves. If the Quran is to be obeyed in sincerity, polygamy is

impossible." "Act equitably," says Mohammed. "Defraud ye not," says St. Paul, and what is impossible to the Moslem is, we maintain, impossible to the Christian under the same circumstances.

Again the words "his own" and "her own" are very emphatic in this passage. If "his own wife" includes the possibility of more than one wife, then "her own husband" includes the possibility of more than one husband; in other words polyandry *must* be admitted into this passage if we admit polygamy. But the fact is that the conception of polygamy does violence to the passage. Yet it is seriously contended that polygamy fulfils the Apostle's conditions. "But in polygamic arrangement every man able can have his wife and every woman her own husband," says one defender of polygamy commenting on 1 Cor. vii. 2. We pass over the fact that St. Paul is incorrectly quoted in this passage, to show that violence is done to the meaning of the English words used. Let us take up a parable to illustrate the latter. A certain man had four wives, all of whom worked on his farm. But as time went on they quarrelled about their respective shares of the work, and so they came to their husband and said, Let us each one have our own farm, and to their request he agreed. But time went on, and he made no attempt to divide the farm into four parts, and so they came to him and repeated their request. Again the husband promised but again he did nothing more. However, when the quarrelling became so bitter that it could be endured no longer, the four wives went to their husband and said, "What do you mean by treating us like this? You have again and again promised us each one our own farm, but you have lied unto us." "No," said the husband, "I have not lied unto you. You each one work on my farm, and so you each one have your own farm." And so he drove them away to their life of toil and quarrelling, but they said one to another, as

they went away, "He *did* lie unto us, for we none of us have *our own* farm." There is no need to labour an explanation. The wives of a polygamist have no more their own husband than those women had their own farm. By no twisting of language can *a proportionate* share be called the *personal possession of the whole*. If St. Paul had said, "Let every woman have her own fourth or fifth or sixth share of a husband" we should have known how many wives he expected his converts to have, and we should have been certain he had in mind what has been called "polygamic arrangement." But the fact remains that he did nothing of the sort!

St. John in the Revelation also makes use of the same illustration in Rev. xix. 7–9 and xxi. 1, 2. Here again "bride" and "wife" are used in the singular number, and the thought of the bride being one of several or the wife being one among a number is quite foreign to the passages. But if polygamy had been lawful and common in the Christian Church in the days of St. Paul and St. John, this must inevitably have been taken into consideration. Neither of these men themselves were likely to fall into the error of using illustrations so inapplicable or parables so inapt, but it is still more certain that the Holy Spirit, the Divine Inspirer of the Scriptures, would, and indeed *did*, save them from such an unfortunate, and such a serious error. For our own part, we are convinced that the polygamist interpreters are the mistaken, and not the writers, much less the Divine Inspirer.

We have touched briefly on the subject of marriage as a type of the union of Christ and His Church, but it calls for a little fuller treatment.

Let us go back once again to the beginning, when for the first Adam there was not found an help meet for him. God saw that it was "not good that the man should be alone," so He made a help meet, a woman, and brought her to Adam. "And Adam said, This is now

bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." And the sacred narrative continues, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

This event, prior to man's fall, fits into the plan of God for the world. It points forward to the spiritual marriage of Christ and His Church, as God's words in the Garden of Eden, subsequent to the fall, point to the conflict between Christ and Satan. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." So God said to the serpent, and our thoughts go at once, as we read, to Calvary where Satan's head was bruised, and where the heel of Christ was bruised. Marriage was an earlier event than the fall, and it points still further down the ages, beyond Calvary, to the Marriage of the Lamb.

St. Paul calls Christ "the last Adam" and "the second Man" (1 Cor. xv. 45, 47). In point of time in relation to earth, Christ was second and Adam first, but Adam was a signpost pointing on down the ages to the last Adam, "the second man the Lord from heaven." "Adam . . . who is the figure of him that was to come" (Rom. v. 4) is St. Paul's description of the first man, and though the particular reference is to Adam's transgression, it is not limited to that, but applies also to Adam's marriage. Now, for the first Adam there was not found an help meet for him. The animals had their mates, but Adam was alone in Creation, the only creature into whom God had breathed the breath of life, so that he became a living soul. From Adam's side God took of his substance and made Eve, flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones.

The second Adam was lonely too, with a great loneliness; misunderstood by those who loved Him best, betrayed by His own familiar friend, and slain by those amongst whom for years He went about doing

good. That loneliness reached its climax on the accursed tree, when He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And as He hung on the Cross, He gave up the ghost, and as He slept a deep sleep, one of the soldiers pierced His side. St. John tells us that "in the place where He was crucified there was a garden" (John xix. 4). Is it merely a coincidence that to both the first and the last Adam there came a deep sleep and a pierced side, and that both events, separated by thousands of years, took place in a garden? And further, the object in both cases was the same—the preparation of an help meet, or a bride.

"From heaven He came and sought her
To be His holy bride,
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died."

We may speak of the Crucifixion as the time of the birth and also the time of the betrothal of the Church, Christ's Bride, and Scripture looks forward to a time, still future, when the Marriage Supper of the Lamb shall take place. "The Kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son." The Bible opens with a marriage (Gen. ii.) and closes with a marriage (Rev. xxi.). To the first Adam God brought Eve whom He had made; and St. John, in the Revelation, "saw the Holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." God, then, is the King which made a marriage for His Son, Christ is the King's Son, and the Church is His holy bride.

"Holy matrimony . . . is an honourable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocency, signifiying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and His Church," says the Anglican Marriage Service, and in one of the prayers in that service God

is spoken of as "God, who hast consecrated the state of matrimony, to such an excellent mystery, that in it is signified and represented the spiritual marriage and unity betwixt Christ and His Church." That these statements are in accordance with New Testament teaching we have already shown. "The husband is head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church" (Eph. v. 23). Adam and Eve, Christ and the Church, husband and wife,—these are compared again and again as types and antitypes, in Scripture.

Looking backward, it is admitted that Adam had only one wife, that he was, in fact, a monogamist. Looking forward, how can anyone dare to read plurality into the marriage of the Lamb—it would be almost, if not quite, blasphemy to talk about the marriages and the brides of the Lamb of God, and it would certainly be unscriptural to do so. Yet men maintain that Scripture does not forbid polygamy! If polygamy is not forbidden by a definite "Thou shall not," by plain implication again and again monogamy is marriage, and marriage is only monogamy. The marriage that is not monogamous is not an antitype of that marriage in Eden which is a God-given type, neither is a polygamous marriage a type of the marriage of the Lamb. Polygamy is somehow off the Divine line which reaches from the Garden of Eden, through the Garden of the Crucifixion, right on to the Garden in which the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be placed. True, a monogamous marriage may be off the Divine line, too, for very many husbands of one wife fail to love their wives as Christ loved the Church, but the polygamous marriage, *in its nature*, places itself off the Divine line and cannot do otherwise. Monogamists look back to the beginning in Eden, or to the consummation of all things in Paradise, and find in each a marriage akin to their own, but there is an essential and a vital difference between the marriage of Eden, and the

marriage of Paradise, on the one hand, and that of the polygamist on the other.

What is the real reason underlying the advocacy of polygamy by those who claim to be Christians? Various answers have been given—a desire for children, or for more children; respect for tribal traditions and customs; the provision of a husband for all women who desire marriage, etc. But there is a reason deeper than any of these. Writing of Noah and his sons, one defender of polygamy says that they "having no children at the time of entering into the ark had no necessity to have second wives." The necessity for polygamy then arises, apparently, when a man's wife conceives or begets a child. He then needs a second wife, not so that he may become the father of more children as some would have us believe, not so as to show respect to his tribal traditions as others make believe, nor for the woman's sake, that she may have a husband, but, to quote another defender of polygamy, because "polygamy alone can honestly furnish sufficient indulgence of love to all the men." There is no need to enlarge on this part of our subject. It is admitted in these words that the man who adds a second wife to his home, by that act is making "provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof," which provision St. Paul forbids. The same Apostle gives his reason for saying, "Let every man have his own wife"—this is a provision which he can honestly recommend to his Christian converts, but beyond this, he recommends no such further provision as is advocated by the writers quoted above.

The question then arises, whether there is any power in Christianity which will enable a man to live the life of purity and continence which Christian monogamy requires. A religion which imposes hard laws upon its followers and does not enable them to keep those laws, is no friend to those who follow it. Does St. Paul

himself claim that such a life is possible? He does. He claims it for himself, and tells how he does it. In 1 Cor. ix. 27 he writes, "I hit hard and straight at my own body and lead it off into slavery, lest possibly, after I have been a herald to other, I should myself be rejected" (Weymouth's translation). The writer of such words is master of his flesh, and not its slave. Here is no "imbecile continence," which one writer gives as the alternative to polygamy, but a brave and true manliness which men worthy of the name must needs admire. He knew what he was talking about when he said, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye *shall not* fulfil the lust of the flesh."

No one would claim that it is easy for the descendants of a polygamous race, living in a tropical country, to adopt monogamy as a rule of life, but the Gospel of Jesus Christ does not profess to be an *easy* rule of life. It is the glory of the Gospel "that it makes the difficult possible—we might say it makes the *impossible* possible—to all the sons of God. "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound." "To them gave He *power* to become the sons of God." "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me." The whole spirit of the New Testament is against the life of the flesh which polygamy legalises. "To be carnally minded is death . . . the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," or according to the margin of the Bible, "the minding of the flesh is death." How can the confessions of the pro-polygamists quoted above be reconciled with the life of flesh-crucifixion which is commended by the Apostle? "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections (or passions) and lusts" (Gal. v. 24). Let it be remembered that we are not making charges against, or judging, the polygamists in this matter, but are contrasting *their own words* with the words of the New

Testament. It would be possible for a man to be a polygamist, and to fulfil the laws we have quoted here, just as it may be possible for a monogamist to be a true monogamist and break the same laws. The polygamist is, however, subject to far more temptations to satisfy to the full the lusts of the flesh than is the monogamist, and the purpose of polygamy, as admitted by the defenders of the custom, is that they may do the very thing which is forbidden in the New Testament.

It is no answer to point to the professed monogamist, and say he is secretly a polygamist, or something worse than a polygamist. Whatever else such an one may be, he is a hypocrite. For him the New Testament has words of condemnation which no casuistry can soften and no sophistry mitigate. "Let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." Christ proclaimed a more severe doom on the outwardly religious, but hypocritical, Pharisee than upon the licentious cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; not that He for a single moment condoned licentiousness, but that, in its most abhorrent form, it wears the cloak of religion. Both are condemned, but those whose knowledge was the greater will be beaten with many stripes. The further we get from the life of the flesh, and the nearer we get to the life of the spirit, the more certain are we to be among those for whom there is therefore now no condemnation. And to himself, and to all monogamists who are tempted to "thank God that they are not as other men are," the writer would say in the words of the Apostle Paul, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"; or in the words of another, "There, but for the grace of God, go I." To all God says, "My grace is *sufficient* for *thee*."

CHAPTER III

The Early Christian Church

IT is contended by some that polygamy was a recognised custom in the Early Christian Church. One writer quotes Nichols as saying "polygamy had been practised by the highest dignitaries of the Church," and also as affirming that polygamy continued in the Christian Church until a comparatively recent period, and was allowed by Luther and the fathers of the Protestant Reformation.

That there is a wide difference of opinion on this subject, however, is easily proved. "I protest," says one writer, "against the assertion that polygamy was ever sanctioned in any primitive Christian Church. Let us have the proofs." The appeal for proofs is surely fair. If Nichols says that "the highest dignitaries of the Church" practised polygamy, it should not be difficult to obtain the names of those dignitaries and some definite information about their wives, but such information is not forthcoming.

On the other hand, there is some evidence that the Early Fathers did not look with favour upon polygamy, and opposed it as contrary to the teaching of the Christian Church.

St. Augustine took the stand that plurality of wives is not contrary to the nature of marriage but, on the other hand, treated the restriction to monogamy as an arbitrary discipline imposed by divine authority on Christians. This testimony seems definite enough.

"In the absence of any express prohibition of polygamy, it is invariably assumed by the writers of the New Testament and by the constant witness of the Christian Church, that monogamy is the rule. . . . Unsupported by any positive prohibition, the Christian witness against polygamy has been unwavering. . . . Apart from the completely abnormal cases of the Anabaptists and the Mormons, the only serious attempt of any one claiming the Christian name to relax this rule is found in the allowance of a second wife accorded by Luther and Melanchthon to Philip of Hesse; the secrecy with which this was done, and the shame of its authors on detection, are the most eloquent assertion of the rule which they violated."

"Simultaneous polygamy has been allowed in many systems of law, but has never obtained a recognised standing in Christendom. . . . There are those who contend that polygamy may be allowed, if not for Christians, still for others who have not the same succours of grace, on the ground of a moral necessity. It was for this cause that Luther and Melanchthon, alone among Christian teachers, permitted Philip of Hesse to take a second wife" (*Lacey*).

St. Thomas Aquinas supports St. Augustine. "Plurality of wives does not in any way hinder the procreation of children; it does to some extent injure the mutual trustfulness and accommodation; it entirely ruins the mystical signification of the Union of Christ with the one Church." He also argued that polygamy destroyed equality of love between husband and wife, introducing a servile relation.

"Simon Magus, to whom a reference is made in Acts viii. 9–24, taught plurality of wives but was rather an open opponent than the corrupter of Christianity."

The attitude which other early Christian writers took up towards marriage generally shows very clearly that the possibility of Christians being polygamists was

outside their conception altogether. Tertullian regarded a second marriage as sin, in spite of St. Paul's advice to younger widows to marry again, and advocated celibacy, "even if mankind should perish," and Jerome said that though it is "marriage that fills the earth, it is virginity that replenishes heaven." Marcion and Tatian railed against marriage, while Origen thought marriage profane and impure.

The testimony of such an independent writer as Lecky, in his famous "History of European Morals," is most damaging to the view that the Early Christian Fathers permitted, and even practised polygamy. He writes: "But the services rendered by the ascetics in imprinting on the minds of men a profound and enduring conviction of the importance of chastity, though extremely great, were seriously counterbalanced by their noxious influence upon marriage. Two or three beautiful descriptions of this institution have been culled out of the immense mass of the patristic writings (the writings of the Early Christian Fathers); . . . the relation which nature has designed for the noble purpose of repairing the ravages of death, and which, as Linnæus has shown, extends even through the world of flowers, was invariably treated as a consequence of the fall of Adam, and marriage was regarded almost exclusively in its lowest aspect. The tender love which it elicits, the holy and beautiful domestic qualities that follow in its train, were almost absolutely omitted from consideration. The object of the ascetic was to attract men to a life of virginity, and, as a necessary consequence, marriage was treated as an inferior state. It was regarded as being necessary, indeed, and therefore justifiable, for the propagation of the species, and to free men from greater evils; but still as a condition of degradation from which all who aspired to real sanctity should fly. To 'cut down by the axe of Virginity the wood of Marriage' was, in the

energetic language of St. Jerome, the end of the saint ; and if he consented to praise marriage it was merely because it produced virgins. Even when the bond had been formed, the ascetic passion retained its sting. . . . Into this the holiest of all (domestic relations) it infused a tenfold bitterness. Whenever any strong religious fervour fell upon a husband or wife, its first effect was to make a happy union impossible. The more religious partner immediately desired to live a life of solitary asceticism, or at least, if no ostensible separation took place, an unnatural life of separation in marriage. The immense place this order of ideas occupies in the hortatory writings of the Fathers, and in the legends of the saints, must be familiar to all who have any knowledge of this department of literature."

The truth of Lecky's words is beyond doubt. If the Fathers regarded marriage in the way described, to attribute even toleration of polygamy to them is absurd.

We are also told that Luther and the fathers of the Protestant Reformation allowed polygamy. Professor Lindsay's admirable history of the Reformation puts rather a different view forward. Says Lindsay :

" Philip (Landgrave of Hesse) had married when barely nineteen a daughter of Duke George of Saxony. Latterly he declared that it was impossible to maintain conjugal relations with her ; that continence was impossible for him ; that the condition in which he found himself harassed his whole life, and prevented him coming to the Lord's Table. In a case like his, Pope Clement VII. only a few years previously, had permitted the husband to take a second wife, and why should not the Protestant divines permit him ? He prepared a case for himself which he submitted to the theologians, and got a reply signed by Bucer, Melanchthon, and Luther, which may be thus summarised :

" ' According to the original commandment of God,

marriage is between one man and one woman, and the twain shall become one flesh, and this original precept has been confirmed by our Lord; but *sin brought it about* that first Lamech, then the heathen, and then Abraham, took more than one wife, and this was permitted by the law. We are now living under the Gospel, which does not give prescribed rules for the regulation of the external life, and it has not expressly prohibited bigamy. The existing law of the land has gone back to the original requirements of God, and the plain duty of the pastorate is to insist on the original requirements of God, and to *denounce bigamy in every* way. Nevertheless the pastorate, in individual cases of the *direst need*, and to prevent worse, may sanction bigamy in a *purely exceptional way*: such a bigamous marriage is a true marriage (the necessity being proved) in the sight of God and of conscience; but it is not a true marriage, with reference to public law or customs. Therefore such a marriage ought to be kept secret, and the dispensation which is given for it ought to be kept under the seal of confession. If it be made known, the dispensation becomes *eo ipso* invalid, and *the marriage becomes mere concubinage.*'" (The italics are ours.)

The historian rightly calls this a strange and scandalous document, which could not, of course, be kept secret, and the moral effect of the revelation was disastrous among friends and foes.

To claim that the fathers of the Protestant Reformation "allowed polygamy" is a strange perversion of history, when they plainly declare that sin brought polygamy into the world, and that it is the plain duty of pastors to denounce bigamy in every way. That they fell short of their ideals in the instance quoted, is of course true but they had the grace to be thoroughly ashamed of their sacrifice of right to expediency, and so desired secrecy.

It seems therefore clearly established that both the

Early Christian Fathers, and the fathers of the Protestant Reformation were, on the whole, strongly opposed to polygamy and regarded it as contrary to the Christian profession. Investigation shows on how very slight a foundation our polygamist friends are prepared to build. Statements do not create facts, and the perverters of history are very liable to be exposed.

CHAPTER IV

Polygamy and the Christian Church of To-day

I

THE attitude of the Christian Churches of to-day towards the question of polygamy is a factor of considerable importance which should not be overlooked.

The English-speaking Churches, both the Anglican and Free Churches, utterly forbid polygamy.

The Church of Rome claims that the law of Christ forbids polygamy. The Council of Trent, in the sixteenth century, decreed that "If any one says that it is given to have at the same time many wives and that this is not forbidden by Divine Law, let him be rejected." The Church of Rome requires celibacy of its clergy, and monogamy of all its members.

The Greek Church permits its inferior clergy to marry, but if they become widowers they may not marry a second time. Polygamy is not allowed to members of the Greek Church, and even divorce is not regarded as dissolving a marriage. The bond of marriage after divorce is regarded as remaining, and the parties are not set free to contract another marriage at pleasure. A licence to divorced persons to marry again is sometimes granted by the ecclesiastical authorities, but this is regarded as permission and not approbation. The Greek Church is thus also against simultaneous polygamy, although a form of what is

sometimes called consecutive polygamy is reluctantly tolerated.

These rules are, of course, primarily intended for the European nations where these Churches are established. What is perhaps of more importance to us is the consideration of the attitude of the Foreign Missionary Societies of the Christian Churches, as the result of years of experience in foreign countries, and often amongst polygamous nations. In the early days of modern missions, the hardships imposed on polygamist converts by adherence to the strict rules of the home churches on the question of polygamy seem to have led some of the missionaries to modify the rules. Thus we have the defenders of polygamy quoting the opinions of missionaries and divines of 30 to 50 years ago on this subject showing a more tolerant attitude than is being taken up to-day unanimously by Christian missionaries in all parts of the world. The change is due to changing conditions and to accumulated experience. The day is rapidly passing when it is a question of showing sympathy to a man who became a polygamist before hearing of Jesus Christ, and of minimising the hardships resulting from his conversion to the Christian religion which requires monogamy. To-day the missionary rarely comes across such, and when he does, the true convert is generally anxious to obey God's laws to the utmost. The defenders of polygamy to-day are not concerned with the hardships which beset those who were polygamists before becoming Christians, but are chiefly anxious about themselves, desiring to have the cloak of religion for their own polygamy, not a few of them being the children of monogamists. They claim liberty for the sake of licence, and it is this attitude which the twentieth century missionary has to face, a totally different problem from that of the previous century. Practically every extract from missionaries and divines quoted in a recent

pamphlet published in Lagos advocating the baptism of polygamists, deals with the result of insisting on a polygamist casting out all his wives save one, so as to remove this bar to baptism, and advocates baptism solely to save inflicting hardships upon the women and children. The question of perpetually permitting polygamy in the Christian Church was not thought of fifty years ago, and to quote these men in support of such a position is unfair to them, and unjust to their memory. They were dealing with what St. Paul would have called "the present distress," and it does not follow that what is "good" at a particular time and under special circumstances, is good for all time and under all circumstances; in fact the qualification rather assumes the contrary. Yet the opinions quoted were indicative of a wide diversity of custom even in those days. The missionaries and divines who advocated the baptism of polygamists who were such before conversion, were advocating a departure from the general practice of the Christian Church; they were not the spokesmen for the Church, but spoke for themselves alone. And it should be noted that they never contemplated the baptism of any but those polygamists who were such before conversion. As opposed to these individual pronouncements, we will quote the official statements of the representatives and committees of the Missionary Churches. We are indebted to a paper read by the Rev. T. C. Anwyl at the Lagos Wesleyan Synod a few years ago for the following extracts:

(*a*) The Report of the Committee (of fifteen Bishops—C.M.S.) appointed to consider the subject of polygamy of heathen converts.

1. "Your Committee desire to affirm distinctly that polygamy is inconsistent with the law of Christ respecting marriage."

2. "They cannot find that either the law of

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Christ or the usage of the early Church would permit the baptism of any man living in the practice of polygamy, even though the polygamous alliances should have been contracted before his conversion."

(*b*) The ruling given in 1885, 1888, and 1908 by the W.M.M.S. is thus :

"No woman, being a member of Society shall marry a man who has a wife already. No man having more than one wife shall be admitted as a member of our Church and it shall be left with the Superintendent Minister to decide whether, on an investigation of the case, the wives of polygamists should be received into Church Fellowship."

(*c*) The General Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society adopted in November, 1900, a special report on the question of polygamous converts and the Congo Mission. It includes the following :

"That in the judgment of the Sub-Committee the whole question of the manner in which the applications from polygamists for baptism and Church membership should be dealt with can best be decided by the Native Christian Churches in conference with the Missionaries at each station."

(*d*) The resolution on polygamy passed by the Moravian Church at their General Synod, 1879 :

"Polygamy and Polyandry are opposed to the idea of Christian marriage. It is therefore the duty of our Missionaries to bear a decided testimony against these heathenish customs."

(*e*) The Presbyterians present a resolution passed by one of the six Chinese Synods, Chao-Hwai-Chow :

1. "By the law of God marriage in accordance

with the truth is that of one man and one woman, each fulfilling a part in a life-long union ; and they may not be separated. Therefore, if a man who has a wife marries another or a woman who has a husband is married to another man, in both cases this is a breach of the law of God."

2. "If anyone who is a member of the Church, while his wife still survives, again marries another, he must certainly be expelled from the fellowship of the Church."

(*f*) A resolution of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in India, 1906, runs thus :

"That it is not advisable to legislate, debarring from admission to the Christian Church an applicant for baptism solely on the ground of his having more than one wife to whom he was legally married before seeking admission to the Christian Church, but that, in its opinion, it is right to leave the responsibility of deciding in individual cases as they arise, with Sessions, which should, however, if the Presbytery with which they are connected so desire, refer each case to the Presbytery."

Among the principles and regulations laid down for guidance, the first is as follows : "I. The Christian law of marriage, viz. the union of one man with one woman, should be strongly emphasised, and such moral and spiritual pressure brought to bear upon the applicants that when, without violating conscience or doing injustice to others concerned, satisfactory arrangements can be made for separating from all but one wife, this will be done."

The Evangelical Church Order for Congregations of the Rhenish Mission in China states :

"Polygamy is contrary to the express and clear command of Christ (Matt. xix. 4) and on this ground alone cannot be tolerated in the Christian Church. On the other hand, however, polygamous ties formed by a member of the Church before his conversion (entrance into the congregation) are not to be looked on as adulterous connections in the Christian sense, and there is therefore no ground for demanding their unconditional abandonment after conversion to Christianity, and hence, as a member of the congregation, no man may take a second wife so long as the first lives, whether because of childlessness, or with the consent, or by the wish of the first wife. Any violation of this ordinance is adultery and must as such be followed by expulsion from the congregation."

II

A recent pronouncement on the subject comes from America. In November, 1917, a conference was held in New York City on "The Christian Occupation of Africa." In reply to the question, "Do you admit to Church membership men living in polygamy?" the representatives of seven Missionary Societies replied "No," and these were the only replies given to the question.

The Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops, held in July and August, 1920, passed the following Resolutions:

"Recognising that to live a pure and chaste life before and after marriage is, for both sexes, the unchangeable Christian standard, attainable and attained through the help of the Holy Spirit by men and women in every age, the Conference desires to proclaim the universal obligation of this standard, and

its vital importance as an essential condition of human happiness." (Resolution 66.)

"The Conference affirms as our Lord's principle and standard of marriage a life-long and indissoluble union, for better for worse, of one man with one woman, to the exclusion of all others on either side, and calls on all Christian people to maintain and bear witness to this standard." (Resolution 67.)

A Committee was appointed by the Conference to consider and report upon "Missionary Problems," among which "Marriage Questions" were specified. Among those who served on this Committee were Bishop Oluwole and Bishop Azariah (an African and an Indian Bishop), Bishop Ingham (formerly Bishop of Sierra Leone), the Bishop of Lagos, and Bishop Linton (formerly a Missionary in the Yoruba country, and now Bishop in Persia). These names are but a few out of the many which could be quoted to prove that the Committee consisted of men who have been for many years face to face with the problems which surround the marriage question in polygamous countries. The following extracts from this Committee's report show the mind of those who represent the Anglican Church in all five of the world's continents:

"That the marriages of non-Christian persons, though not of necessity exclusive or life-long, are states of life in which they can and do live without sin, and that where both parties to such a marriage become Christians, the marriage is raised by Baptism to the level of Christian marriage, and must be reckoned as exclusive and life-long."

"With regard to marriage contracted by non-Christians, good in the non-Christian Law, but contrary to Christian Law, we re-affirm the resolution of the Lambeth Conference of 1888: '*That it is the opinion of this Conference that persons living in polygamy be not admitted to baptism. . . .*'

"We are of opinion that if a polygamist wishes to separate from his wives and be baptized, care must be taken that he make proper arrangements for the separated wives before he can be accepted."

Much more might be quoted from the proceedings of the recent Lambeth Conference, but sufficient has been given to prove that more than 250 Bishops of the Anglican Church from all parts of the world are to-day solidly against any toleration of polygamy by the Christian Church.

One more quotation is all we have room for in bringing this section of our study on "Polygamy and the Christian Church" to a close.

A non-missionary writer, dealing with polygamy among the races in South Africa, has the following pertinent remarks: "I admit that there are a few missionary cranks who are in favour of admitting polygamists into the Church, and to be consistent they . . . should baptise heathenism wholesale. But I doubt whether one missionary in a hundred would advise the admission of polygamists into the Church. Of those who tentatively adopt the custom, nine out of ten change their minds after trying the method for four or five years." (Dudley Kidd, "The Essential Kaffir.")

The voice of the Christian Church, ancient as well as modern, from the east as well as from the west, has been consistently raised against polygamy, with its licence for men and its low ideals of womanhood. Those who have differed are rightly termed "cranks," and are merely the exceptions proving the rule. If "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church," then to be quite consistent, I shall also believe in "twain becoming one flesh in the Lord."

CHAPTER V

The Future of Polygamy

I

THIS title does not indicate any attempt at prophecy. An idea of what the future of polygamy is likely to be can possibly be obtained by noticing which way these various world-movements are tending which affect marriage, the relation of the sexes, home life, etc.

In the first place, the one great religion of the world which sanctions polygamy is Mohammedanism, yet the most enlightened exponents of Mohammedanism to-day are either explaining away or repudiating the teaching of the Koran on the subject of polygamy. Moslem apologists see that polygamy is incompatible with the highest social and moral ideals of the world to-day. They recognise that the permission given by Mohammed to his followers to take up to four wives was a compromise which, while improving on the customs of Mohammed's day, falls short of the ideals which Christianity taught even at that time. These apologists see that the time has come to disown such compromise lest they be left behind in the progress of the world. While admitting that this movement is not by any means wide-spread, we maintain that it is a little leaven which in time may be expected to leaven the whole lump. When Moslems begin to repudiate polygamy, the custom is in some danger.

The Christian Missionary work being done to-day in almost every part of the earth, is greatly influencing the polygamist nations of the world. The opening of the zenanas of India to women missionaries and the constant visitation by Christian women of the harems of the Moslem East are bringing new visions of life to the descendants of the generations of women in those lands whose horizons were bounded by compound walls, and who lived in ignorance of the great world movements without. "The Moral Impact of the Gospel," as it has been called, is increasingly affecting the nations, and many superstitions and many hurtful customs connected with polygamy are being abolished. One such belief which amounts almost to a superstition, is that which says that if a woman becomes pregnant while nursing her previous child, the unborn child will die, or the child being nursed will die. Dr. Strachan, in lectures delivered in Lagos about 1900, warned his hearers against this superstition, and for years his words have been taught to the children in the Lagos schools. He, of course, was speaking from a purely medical point of view. The custom of a woman nursing her child until it is three or four years old is one of the strongholds of polygamy, but experience and medical science prove that the custom owes its strength to a superstition which is harmful. Yet recently this idea was spoken of as though it were an indisputable fact, in a monthly paper published in Lagos.

Writing of some results of Christian Missionary work on the Congo, a lady missionary says this custom "has been vigorously attacked and the Christians have abandoned it. Lessons from the Mosaic law have proved of great use. . . . The abandonment of this custom has revolutionised home life. Women bear children in quick succession. The contrast between the children of a Christian village and those of a heathen one is a grand testimony to the power of Christ in the

country. The children of our Christians are children in the real sense of the word, bright, intelligent, and physically strong, and our villages are full of them. The children in the heathen towns are like little old men and women, many of them syphilitic. In some heathen villages only one or two puny specimens of childhood are visible."

The spread of Christianity is reducing the amount of polygamy in the world. The writer thinks of two examples which have recently come to notice; one, an African's experience of Christian home life in England, has resulted in a determination to strive to reach a higher ideal in married life; the other, an African king, has deliberately decided not to follow the wholesale polygamy which is the tradition of the office to which he has succeeded.

Another great force which is arising against polygamy is known as "The Feminist Movement." So long as woman was a thing to be bought and sold, the sexual domination of man over woman was easily maintained. To-day, a new type is arising, and "the forceful, independent-thinking woman, always mindful of her rights and jealous of her position in the home, is not the type of reformer likely to applaud polygamous marriage." Mrs. Ethel Snowden writes that "the educated and advanced women of Turkey demand prohibition of polygamy, the right to choose a husband, and higher education. The freeing of Turkish women is only a matter of time." Says another writer: "The bias against polygamy is a phase of the Feminist Movement, which is invading every quarter of the civilised globe. This is not the mere agitation of a disfranchised sex, but a tremendous, clamant uprising of thoughtful women, aroused after centuries of repression and inertia, to revolution and to the complete reconstruction of all social opinions, moral codes, and laws affecting their sex. . . . Wider knowledge for women is the rock

upon which the system (the harem) will ultimately wreck itself." According to C. N. Starcke, author of "The Primitive Family," polygamy will, in course of time, disappear. Polygamy is not the only enemy the Feminist Movement will destroy. Even where monogamy is the law of the land, that law does not demand the same standard of conjugal faithfulness from a man as from a woman, an inequality which is unfair and unjust. Women are destined in a few years to have a large share in the legislature in civilised countries, and those man-made laws which penalise women for what is tolerated in men, are doomed to be blotted out of the world's statute books. The sooner this happens, the better will it be for the human race. Christ's refusal to sanction the stoning of the woman taken in adultery while her partner in guilt went free, showed that *He* had not one standard of conduct for women and a lower standard for men.

II

Sociology—the study of man as a social being—is a science which is making rapid progress in our day, and it will not for very long tolerate a condition of life which largely deprives children of the protection and training which only a father can give to his offspring. "Is that mother's love the highest which would forgo a father's love for his children?" A medical man writes: "It is a particularly good thing for a child to have two parents, one of each kind. We fathers are too apt to consider that we have done our duty when we have provided a place and means for our wives to take care of our children. A child has just as much right to and need of his father's companionship and help and influence as his mother's." To give that companionship and help and influence is a practical impossibilty for a man with several wives and numerous

children, with possibly each mother and her particular children in a separate house. A father is in some countries punished by law if he withholds from his children the needed food and clothing, but to deprive those children of his personal presence, help, sympathy and training is a greater crime, even though not punishable by law at present. The relationship between father and child, which is so beautiful a thing where father, mother, and children live together in a true Christian home, is unknown and impossible under polygamy. What conception of the Heavenly Father can those young children have whose father is only an occasional visitor to their home, content with merely paying for their food and shelter—if even that—but leaving their training and upbringing to the mother alone? Women can, and are, speaking for themselves, but the children are unable to ask for what they need so badly, a purer and nobler and higher life in the home than they have to-day. There is One, however, who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not," who is still the children's Saviour, and He will one day judge those fathers who have brought children into the world only to rob them of a father's personal love and devotion and watchful care. "Inasmuch as ye did it *not* to one of the least of these, ye did it *not* to Me." The influence of sociology on the future of polygamy is likely to be considerable, and its condemnation of the custom is certain to be severe.

We close our remarks about the future of polygamy by asking a question and suggesting an answer. What is likely to be the future of the Churches which tolerate polygamy, as indicated by the trend of events in recent years, and looked at in the light of God's Word? A writer in *The Times of Nigeria*, recently expressed the hope that the new President of one of these Churches "will exert his influence to exterminate the bad trait in the Church wherewith ministers are allowed to

accumulate wives." If this charge is true, it indicates a serious lowering of earlier ideals, and is, it is to be feared, only one of several indications of a declension which would be ominous for the future of Christianity in Yorubaland, if there were not other Churches which hold tenaciously to higher ideals. Another sad indication of this lowering of ideals is the statement we have heard repeatedly that as soon as any prominent worker, minister or layman, is disconnected, or disconnects himself, from one of the older Churches on account of some serious moral lapse, approaches are made to him to accept a position in one of the polygamous Churches, even in some cases a higher position than the one he has left.

So far as we can ascertain, no attempt is made in these cases, to see whether there are any fruits of repentance, or to obtain a promise of a changed life in the future. Thus we find men styled "The Reverend" to-day who have failed to face, or if faced have failed to disprove, charges which have been preferred against them of such grievous sins as adultery and other sins of the flesh, misappropriation of Church funds, dealing in heathen medicines and the like, which things have led to the severing of their connection with the older Churches. The effect of having such men to conduct Christian services must inevitably be the deadening of the sense of sin and the weakening of the moral fibre of those connected with the Churches in which they minister. It is too painful a subject to pursue further, but we appeal in Christian love for a realisation of the gravity of the present state of things, and for the raising of the standard for Christian workers and specially for Christian ministers, in these Churches. The shame of these things is, however unjustly, upon all the Churches. When the heathen blaspheme, they are apt to fail to discriminate between those who abhor these evils, and those who tolerate them.

"Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord." Church history contains many warnings of the sad fate which has, in all ages, befallen Churches which have lowered the Christian ideal, which have said and not performed, and which have regarded breaches of the Christian law as small matters so long as outward forms and ceremonies have been duly observed. "He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks" saw from whence these Churches had fallen, and their failure to repent and do the first works, and one by one the candlesticks were removed out of their places. Is He not the same yesterday, and to-day and for ever? The future of a Church which lowers the Christian ideal —and the toleration of polygamy within the Church is certainly that—is clearly indicated in these words we have quoted from Revelation ii. History will repeat itself, and though heaven and earth shall pass away, the words of Christ shall not pass away.

APPENDIX I

ONE critic found fault with the original articles on which this book is based, because there was no reference to the views of medical practitioners on the subject of polygamy. An African medical man, who has had a long and extensive practice in Lagos, has very kindly supplied the following as his contribution to the problem :

" Viewed from a purely medical standpoint, Polygamy, as an institution, does not make for the best that mankind is capable of.

" Rest in all its varied forms is a necessity for growth of all kinds, and for every stage of progress. Without adequate rest for recuperation, virile growth is impossible, and true and lasting progress is severely handicapped.

" A calm and composed mind is necessary for the solution of human difficulties : for the proper adjustment of apparently incompatible ideas : for the analysing of complex problems that confront humanity every day : for the toning down of differences private and public, that do not make for unity : for the proper focussing of current events, and correct forecasting of future probabilities. And rest is needed for a calm and composed mind.

" For the physical endurance of hardships and continued sustenance under fatigue, rest for the body needs to be encouraged and promoted.

" Whatever militates against rest in the various spheres already indicated, militates against efficiency and retards true progress.

" The wear and tear of a polygamous life, with its attendant unrest and unceasing worry, is highly detrimental to the preservation of that vigour of mind and body which is necessary for the successful prosecution of the mental and physical

duties of everyday life, while it reduces the activity of the nervous system in its higher sphere of activity to very narrow proportions.

"Polygamy encourages the lustful side of man, and by so doing tends to deterioration and enervation generally, and subsequently to premature decay, exhaustion and early senility.

"MEDICO."

APPENDIX II

Extracts from the Writings of Tertullian

Introduction.

TERTULLIAN, of Carthage in North Africa, a presbyter in the Christian Church, was a very clever and learned man, and a convert from heathenism. He was a writer of books in defence of the Gospel, about the year A.D. 200. Tertullian is very frequently quoted in books dealing with Church History and Christian Doctrine. He was, in his day, the chief representative of African Christianity. The north of Africa was then crowded with rich and populous cities, and Carthage was its capital. "No Churches in the world have been so influential as the Greek Church of Alexandria and the Latin Church of Africa—one the mother of Eastern, the other of Western theology." It is hoped that the extracts from an African Christian of the third century will prove both interesting and helpful to African Christians in the twentieth century.

From "On Exhortation to Chastity."

Chapter V.—*Unity of marriage taught by its first institution, and by the Apostle's application of that primal type to Christ and the Church.*

For the laying down of the law of once marrying, the very origin of the human race is our authority; witnessing as it emphatically does what God constituted in the beginning for a type to be examined with care by posterity. For when He had moulded man, and had foreseen that a peer was necessary for him, He borrowed from his ribs one, and fashioned for him one woman; whereas of course neither the Artificer nor the material would have been insufficient for the creation

of more. There were more ribs in Adam, and hands that knew no weariness in God; but no plurality of wives in the eye of God. And accordingly the man of God, Adam, and the woman of God, Eve, discharging mutually the duties of one marriage, sanctioned for mankind a type by the authoritative precedent of their origin and the primal will of God. Finally, "There shall be," said He, "two in one flesh," not three nor four. On any other hypothesis, there would no longer be "one flesh," nor "two joined into one flesh." These will be so, if the conjunction and growing together in unity takes place once *for all*. If, however, it takes place a second time, or oftener, immediately the flesh ceases to be "one," and there will not be "two joined into one flesh," but plainly one rib divided into more. But when the apostle interprets, "The two shall be joined into one flesh," of the Church and Christ, according to the spiritual nuptials of the Church and Christ (for Christ is one, and one is His Church), we are bound to recognise a duplication and additional enforcement for *us* of the law of unity of marriage; not only in accordance with the foundation of our race, but in accordance with the Sacrament of Christ. From one marriage do we derive our origin in each case; carnally in Adam, spiritually in Christ. The two births combine in laying down one prescriptive * rule of monogamy. In regard of each of the two, he is degenerate who transgresses the limit of monogamy. Plurality of marriage began with an accursed man. Lamech was the first who, by marrying himself to two women, caused *three* to be joined "into one flesh."

CHAPTER VI.—*The objection from the polygamy of the patriarchs answered.*

"But withal the blessed patriarchs," you say, "made mingled alliances not only with more wives than one, but with concubines likewise." Shall that, then, make it lawful for us also to marry without limit? I grant that it will, if there still remain types—sacraments of something future—for your nuptials to figure; or if even now there is room for that command, "Grow and multiply"; that is, if no other

* Prescriptive = acquired by immemorial use and enjoyment; pleading the authority of custom.

command has yet supervened : " The time is already wound up ; it remains that both they who have wives act as if they had not " : for, of course, by enjoining continence, and restraining concubitance the seminary of our race, this latter command has abolished that " Grow and multiply." As I think, moreover, each pronouncement and arrangement is the act of one and the same God ; who did then indeed, in the beginning send forth a sowing of the race by an indulgent laxity granted to the reins of connubial alliances, until the world should be replenished, until the material of the new discipline should attain to forwardness ; now, however, at the extreme boundaries of the times, has checked the command which He had sent out, and recalled the indulgence which He had granted ; not without a reasonable ground for the extension of that indulgence in the beginning, and the limitation of it in the end. Laxity is always allowed to the beginning of things.

The reason why anyone plants a wood and lets it grow, is that at his own time he may cut it. The wood was the old order, which is being pruned down by the new gospel, in which withal " the axe has been laid at the roots." So, too, " Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth," has grown old, ever since " Let none render evil for evil " grew young. I think, moreover, that even with a view to *human* institutions and decrees, things later prevail over things primitive.

From " On Monogamy."

Chapter I.—*Different views in regard to marriage held by Heretics, Psychics, and Spiritualists.*

Heretics do away with marriages ; Psychics accumulate them. The former marry not *even* once. What dost thou, Law of the Creator ? Between alien eunuchs and thine own groom, thou complainest as much of the over-obedience of thine own household as of the contempt of strangers. They who abuse thee, do thee equal hurt with them who use thee not. In fact, neither is such continence laudable because it is heretical, nor such licence defensible because it is psychical. The former is blasphemous, the latter wanton ; the former destroys the God of marriage, the latter puts Him to the blush.

Among *us*, however, whom the recognition of spiritual gifts entitles to be deservedly called Spiritual, continence is as religious as licence is modest; since both the one and the other are in harmony with the Creator. Continence honours the law of marriage, license tempers it; the former is not forced, the latter is regulated; the former recognises the power of free choice, the latter recognises a limit. We admit one marriage, just as we do one God. The law of marriage reaps an accession of honour where it is associated with shamefastness. But to the Psychists, since they receive not the Spirit, the things which are the Spirit's are not pleasing. Thus, so long as the things which are the Spirit's please them not, the things which are of the flesh will please as being the contraries of the Spirit. "The flesh," saith the Apostle, "lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit, against the flesh." But what will the flesh "lust" after, except what is more of the flesh? For which reason withal, in the beginning, it became estranged from the Spirit. "My Spirit," saith God, "shall not permanently abide in these men eternally, for they are flesh."

CHAPTER II.—*The Spiritualist Vindicated from the charge of novelty.*

And so they upbraid the discipline of monogamy with being a heresy; nor is there any other cause whence they find themselves compelled to deny the Paraclete more than the fact that they esteem Him to be the institutor of a novel discipline, and a discipline which they find most harsh: so that this is already the first ground on which we must join issue in a general handling of the subject, whether there is room for maintaining that the Paraclete has taught any such thing as can either be charged with novelty, in opposition to catholic tradition, or with burdensomeness, in opposition to the "light burden" of the Lord.

Now concerning each point the Lord Himself has pronounced. For in saying, "I still have many things to say unto you, but ye are not yet able to bear them: when the Holy Spirit shall be come, He will lead you into all truth," He sufficiently, of course, sets before us that He will bring such teachings as may be esteemed alike *novel*, as having never

before been published, and finally *burdensome*, as if that were the reason why they were not published. "It follows," you say, "that by this line of argument, anything you please which is novel and burdensome may be ascribed to the Paraclete, even if it have come from the adversary spirit." No, of course. For the adversary spirit would be apparent from the diversity of his preaching, beginning by adulterating the rule of faith, and so going on to adulterating the order of discipline; because the corruption of that which holds the first grade, (that is, of faith, which is prior to discipline,) comes first. A man must of necessity hold heretical views of God first, and then of His institution. But the Paraclete, having many things to teach fully which the Lord deferred till He came, (according to the pre-definition,) will begin by bearing emphatic witness to Christ, as being such as we believe Him to be, together with the whole order of God the Creator, and will glorify Him, and will "bring to remembrance" concerning Him. And when He has thus been recognised as the promised Comforter, on the ground of the cardinal rule, He will reveal those "many things" which appertain to disciplines; while the integrity of His preaching commands credit for these revelations, albeit they be "novel," inasmuch as they are now in course of revelation, albeit they be "burdensome," inasmuch as not even *now* are they found bearable: revelations, however, of none other Christ than the One who said that He had withal "other many things" which were to be fully taught by the Paraclete, no less burdensome to men of our own day than to them, by whom they were then "not yet able to be borne."

CHAPTER III.—*The question of novelty further considered in connection with the words of the Lord and His apostles.*

But as for the question whether monogamy be "burdensome," let the still shameless "infirmity of the flesh" look to that; let us meantime come to an agreement as to whether it be "novel." This even broader assertion we make: that even if the Paraclete had in this our day definitively prescribed a virginity or continence total and absolute, so as not to permit the heat of the flesh to foam itself down even in single marriage, even thus He would seem to be introducing nothing of

"novelty"; seeing that the Lord Himself opens "the kingdoms of the heavens" to "eunuchs," as being Himself, withal, a virgin; to whom looking, the apostle also himself too for this reason abstinent—gives the preference to continence.

CHAPTER IV.—*Waiving allusion to the Paraclete Tertullian comes to the consideration of the ancient Scriptures, and their testimony on the subject in hand.*

Waiving, now, the mention of the Paraclete, as of some authority of our own, evolve we the common instruments of the primitive Scriptures. This very thing is demonstrable by us: that the rule of monogamy is neither novel nor strange, nay rather, is both ancient, and proper to Christians; so that you may be sensible that the Paraclete is rather its *re*stitutor than *in*stitutor. As for what pertains to antiquity, what more ancient formal type can be brought forward, than the very original fount of the human race? One female did God fashion for the male, calling one rib of his, and (of course) one out of a plurality. But, moreover, in the introductory speech which preceded the work itself, He said, "It is not good for the man that he be alone; let us make an help meet for him." For He would have said "helpers" if he had destined him to have more wives than one. He added, too, a law concerning the future; if, that is the words, "And two shall be made into one flesh"—not three, nor more; else they would be no more "two" if there were more—were prophetically uttered. The law stood firm. In short, the unity of marriage lasted to the very end in the case of the authors of our race; not because there were no other women, but because the reason why there were none was that the first-fruits of the race might not be contaminated by a double marriage. Otherwise, had God so willed, there *could* withal have been others; at all events, he might have taken from the abundance of his own daughters—having no less an Eve taken out of his own bones and flesh—if piety had allowed it to be done. But where the first crime is found –homicide, inaugurated in fratricide—no crime was so worthy of the second place as a double marriage. Still, God's institution, after once for all suffering violence through Lamech, remained

firm to the very end of that race. Second Lamech there arose none, in the way of being husband to two wives. What Scripture does not note, it denies. Other iniquities provoked the deluge: iniquities once for all avenged, whatever was their nature; not, however, "seventy-seven times," which is the vengeance which double marriages have deserved.

But again: the re-formation of the second human race is traced from monogamy as its mother. Once more, "two joined into one flesh" undertake the duty of "growing and multiplying"—Noah, namely, and his wife, and their sons, in single marriage. Even in the very animals monogamy is recognised, for fear that even beasts should be born of adultery. "Out of all beasts," said God, "out of all flesh two shalt thou lead into the ark, that they may live with thee, male and female: they shall be taken from all flying animals according to their kind, and from all creepers of the earth according to their kind; two out of all shall enter unto thee, male and female." In the same formula, too, He orders sets of sevens, made up of pairs, to be gathered to him, consisting of male and female—one male and one female. What more shall I say? Even unclean birds were not allowed to enter with two females each.

CHAPTER V.—*Connection of these primeval testimonies with Christ.*

Thus far for the testimony of things primordial, and the sanction of our origin, and the pre-judgment of the divine institution, which of course is a law, not merely a memorial; inasmuch as, if it was "so done from the beginning," we find ourselves directed to the beginning by Christ: just as, in the question of divorce, by saying that they had been permitted by Moses on account of their hard-heartedness, but from the beginning it had not been so, He doubtless recalls "to the beginning" the law of the individuality of marriage. And accordingly, those whom God "from the beginning" conjoined, "two into one flesh," man shall not at the present day separate. The apostle, too, writing to the Ephesians, says that God "had proposed in Himself, at the dispensation of the fulfilment of the times, to recall to the head" (that is, to the beginning) "things universal in Christ, which are

above the heavens and above the earth in Him" (Eph. i. 9, 10). So too, the two Greek letters, the first and the last, the Lord assumes to Himself, as figures of the beginning and end which concur in Himself: so that, just as Alpha rolls on till it reaches Omega, and again Omega rolls back till it reaches Alpha, in the same way He might show that in Himself is both the downward course of the beginning on to the end, and the backward course of the end up to the beginning; so that every economy, ending in Him through whom it began, through the Word of God, that is, who was made flesh, may have an end corresponding to its beginning. And so truly in Christ are all things recalled "to the beginning," that even faith returns to the integrity of that original flesh, as "it was from the beginning"; and freedom of meats and abstinence from blood alone, as "it was from the beginning"; and the individuality of marriage, as "it was from the beginning"; and the restriction of divorce, which *was not* "from the beginning," and lastly the whole man into Paradise, where he was "from the beginning." Why, then, ought He not to restore Adam thither at least as a monogamist, who cannot present him in so entire perfection as he was when dismissed thence? Accordingly, as far as pertains to the restitution of the beginning, the logic both of the dispensation you live under, and of your hope, exact this from you, that what was "from the beginning" should be in accordance with "the beginning"; which beginning you first counted in Adam, and recounted in Noah. Make your election in which of the twain you account your "beginning." In both the censorial power of monogamy claims you for itself. But again; if the beginning passes on to the end (as Alpha to Omega), and thus our origin is transferred to Christ, the animal to the spiritual,—inasmuch as "that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is animal: then what is spiritual,"—let us, in like manner as before, see whether you owe this very same thing to this second origin also: whether the last Adam also meet you in the self-same form as the first: since the last Adam (that is Christ) was entirely unwedded, as was even the first Adam before his exile. But, presenting to your weakness the gift of the example of His own flesh the more perfect Adam—that is Christ, more perfect on this account as well as on others, that He was more entirely pure—stands before you

if you are willing to copy Him, as a voluntary celibate in the flesh. If, however, you are unequal to that perfection, He stands before you as a monogamist in spirit, having one church as His spouse, according to the figure of Adam and Eve, which figure the apostle interprets of that great sacrament of Christ and the Church, teaching that, through the spiritual, it was analogous to the carnal monogamy. You see, therefore, after what manner, renewing your origin even in Christ, you cannot trace down that origin without the profession of monogamy; unless, that is, you be in flesh what He is in spirit: albeit withal, what He was in flesh, you equally ought to have been.

CHAPTER VI.—*The case of Abraham, and its bearing on the present question.*

But let us proceed with our inquiry into some eminent chief fathers of our origin: for there are some to whom our monogamist parents Adam and Noah are not pleasing, nor perhaps Christ either. To Abraham, in fine, they appeal; prohibited though they are to acknowledge any other father than God. Grant, now, that Abraham is our father; grant, too, that Paul is, "In the gospel," says he, "I have begotten you." Show yourself a son even of Abraham. For your origin in him, you must know, is not referable to every period of his life: there is a definite time at which he is your father. For if "faith" is the source whence we are reckoned to Abraham as his "sons" (as the apostle teaches, saying to the Galatians, "you know, consequently, that they who are of faith, these are sons of Abraham"), *when* did Abraham "believe God and it was accounted to him for righteousness?" I suppose when still in monogamy, since he was not yet in circumcision. But if afterwards he changed to either opposite —to bigamy through cohabitation with his handmaid, and to circumcision through the seal of the testament—you cannot acknowledge him as your father except at that time when he "believed God," if it is true that it is according to *faith* that you are his son, not according to *flesh*. Else, if it be the later Abraham whom you follow as your father—that is, the bigamist Abraham—receive him withal in his circumcision. If you reject his circumcision, it follows that you will refuse

his bigamy too. Two characters of his, mutually diverse in two several ways, you will not be able to blend. His bigamy began with circumcision, his monogamy with uncircumcision. You receive bigamy; admit circumcision too. You retain uncircumcision; you are bound to monogamy too. Moreover, so true is it that it is of the monogamist Abraham that you are the son, just as of the uncircumcised, that if you be circumcised you immediately cease to be his son, inasmuch as you will not be "of faith," but of the *seal* of a faith which has been justified in uncircumcision. You have the apostle: learn of him, together with the Galatians. In like manner, too, if you have involved yourself in bigamy, you are not the son of that Abraham whose "faith" preceded in monogamy. For albeit it is subsequently that he is called "a father of many nations," still it is of *those* nations, who, as the fruit of the faith which precedes bigamy, had to be accounted "sons of Abraham."

Thenceforward let matters see to themselves. Figures are one thing; laws another. Images are one thing; statutes another. Images pass away when fulfilled: statutes remain permanently to be fulfilled. Images prophesy; statutes govern. What that bigamy of Abraham portends, the same apostle fully teaches, the interpreter of each testament, just as he likewise lays it down that our "seed" is called in Isaac. If you are "of the free woman," and belong to Isaac, he, at all events, maintained unity of marriage to the last.

These accordingly, I suppose, are they in whom my origin is counted. All others I ignore. And if I glance around at their examples—examples of some David heaping up marriages for himself even through sanguinary means, of some Solomon rich in wives as well as in other riches—you are bidden to "follow the better things"; and you have withal Joseph but once wedded, and on this score I venture to say better than his father; you have Moses, the intimate eye-witness of God; you have Aaron the chief priest. The second Moses, also, of the second People, who led our representatives into the possession of the promise of God, in whom the name of Jesus was first inaugurated, was no bigamist.

CHAPTER VIII.—*From the law Tertullian comes to the gospel. He begins with examples before coming to dogmas.*

Turning now to the law, which is properly ours—that is, to the gospel—by what kind of examples are we met, until we come to definite dogmas? Behold, there immediately present themselves to us, on the threshold as it were, the two priestesses of Christian sanctity, Monogamy and Continence: one modest, in Zechariah the priest; one absolute, in John the forerunner: one appeasing God; one preaching Christ: one proclaiming a perfect priest; one exhibiting "more than a prophet,"—him, namely, who has not only preached or personally pointed out, but even baptised Christ. For who was more worthily to perform the initiatory rite on the body of the Lord, than flesh similar in kind to that which conceived and gave birth to that body? And indeed it was a virgin, about to marry once for all after her delivery, who gave birth to Christ, in order that each title of sanctity might be fulfilled in Christ's parentage, by means of a mother who was both virgin, and wife of one husband. Again, when He is presented as an infant in the temple, who is it receives Him into his hands? who is the first to recognise Him in Spirit? a man "just and circumspect," and of course no bigamist, which is plain even from this consideration, lest otherwise Christ should presently be more worthily preached by a woman, an aged widow, and "the wife of one man"; who, living devoted to the temple, was already giving in her own person a sufficient token what sort of persons ought to be the adherents of the spiritual temple,—that is, the Church. Such eye-witnesses the Lord in infancy found; no different ones had He in adult age. Peter alone do I find—through the mention of his mother-in-law—to have been married. Monogamist I am led to presume him by consideration of the Church, which, built upon him, was destined to appoint every grade of her order from monogamists. The rest, while I do not find them married, I must of necessity understand to have been either eunuchs or continent. Nor indeed, if, among the Greeks, in accordance with the carelessness of custom, women and wives are classed under a common name—however there is a name proper to *wives*—shall we so interpret Paul as if he demonstrates the apostles to have had wives? For if

he were disputing about marriages, as he does in the sequel, where the apostle could better have named some particular example, it would appear right for him to say, " For have we not the power of leading about *wives*, like the other apostles and Cephas ? " But when he subjoins those expressions which show his abstinence from insisting on the supply of maintenance, saying, " For have we not the power of eating and drinking ? " he does not demonstrate that " wives " were led about by the apostles, whom even such as have not, still have the power of eating and drinking ; but simply " women," who used to minister to them in the same way as they did when accompanying the Lord. But further, if Christ reproves the scribes and Pharisees, sitting in the official chair of Moses, but not doing what they taught, what kind of supposition is it that He Himself withal should set upon His own official chair men who were mindful rather to enjoin—but not likewise to practise—sanctity of the flesh, which sanctity He had in all ways recommended to their teaching and practising ?—first by His own example, then by all other arguments ; while He tells them that " the kingdom of heavens " is " children's " ; while He associates with these children others who, after marriage, remained or became virgins ; while He calls them to copy the simplicity of the dove, a bird not merely inocuous, but modest too, and whereof one male knows one female ; while He denies the Samaritan woman's partner to be a husband, that He may show that manifold husbandry is adultery ; while, in the revelation of His own glory, He prefers, from among so many saints and prophets, to have with Him Moses and Elias—the one a monogamist, the other a voluntary celibate (for Elias was nothing less than John, who came " in the power and spirit of Elias ") ; while that " man gluttonous and toping," the " frequenter of luncheons and suppers, in the company of publicans and sinners," sups once for all at a single marriage, though of course many were marrying around Him ; for He willed to *attend* marriages only so often as He willed them to *be*.

Chapter XII.

" So true is it," say our opponents, " that the apostle has permitted the iteration of marriage, that it is only such as

are in the Clerical Order that he has stringently bound to the yoke of monogamy. For that which he prescribes to certain individuals he does not prescribe to all." Does it then follow, too, that to bishops alone he does *not* prescribe what he does enjoin upon all; if what he does prescribe to bishops he does *not* enjoin upon all? or is it *therefore* to all *because* to bishops? and *therefore* to bishops *because* to all? From whence is it that the bishops and clergy come? Is it not from *all*? If *all* are not bound to monogamy, whence are monogamists to be taken into the clerical rank? Will some separate order of monogamists have to be instituted, from which to make selection for the clerical body? No; but when we are extolling and inflating ourselves in opposition to the clergy, then "we are all one": then "we are all priests, because He hath made us priests to His God and Father." When we are challenged to a thorough equalisation with the sacerdotal discipline, we lay down the priestly fillets, and still are on a par! The question in hand when the apostle was writing was with reference to Ecclesiastical Orders—what sort of men ought to be ordained. It was therefore fitting that all the form of the common discipline should be set forth on its forefront, as an edict to be in a certain sense universally and carefully attended to, that the laity might the better know that they must themselves observe that order which was indispensable to their overseers; and that even the office of honour itself might not flatter itself in anything tending to licence, as if on the ground of privilege of position.

Come, now, you who think that an exceptional law of monogamy is made with reference to bishops, abandon withal your remaining disciplinary titles, which, together with monogamy, are ascribed to bishops. Refuse to be "irreprehensible, sober, of good morals, orderly, hospitable, easy to be taught"; nay, indeed, be "given to wine, prompt with the hand to strike, combative, money-loving, not ruling your house, nor caring for your children's discipline,"—no, nor "courting good renown even from strangers." For if bishops have a law of their own teaching monogamy, the other characteristics likewise, which will be the fitting concomitants of monogamy, will have to be written exclusively for bishops. With the laity, however, to whom monogamy is not suitable, the other characteristics also have nothing to do. Thus,

Psychic, you have, if you please, evaded the bonds of discipline in its entirety! Be consistent in prescribing, that "what is enjoined upon certain individuals is not enjoined upon all"; or else, if the other characteristics indeed are common, but monogamy is imposed upon bishops alone, tell me, pray, whether *they* alone are to be pronounced *Christians* upon whom is conferred the entirety of discipline?

Chapter XV.

What harshness, therefore, is here on our part, if we renounce communion with such as do not the will of God? For what is adultery but unlawful marriage? The apostle sets a brand upon those who were wont entirely to forbid marriage, who were wont at the same time to lay an interdict on meats which God had created. We, however, no more do away with marriage if we abjure its repetition, than we reprobate meats if we fast oftener than others. It is one thing to do away with, another to regulate; it is one thing to lay down a law of not marrying, it is another to fix a limit to marrying. To speak plainly, if they who reproach us with harshness, or esteem heresy to exist in this our cause, foster the "infirmity of the flesh" to such a degree as to think it must have support accorded to it in frequency of marriage; why do they in another case neither accord it support nor foster it with indulgence—when, namely, torments have reduced it to a denial of the faith? For, of course, that infirmity is more capable of excuse which has fallen in battle, than that which has fallen in the bed-chamber; that which has succumbed on the rack, than that which has succumbed on the bridal-bed; that which has yielded to cruelty, than that which has yielded to appetite; that which has been overcome groaning, than that which has been overcome in heat. But the former they excommunicate, because it has not "endured unto the end"; the latter they prop up, as if withal it has "endured unto the end." Propose the question why each has not "endured unto the end"; and you will find the cause of that infirmity to be more honourable which has been unable to sustain savagery, than of that which has been unable to sustain modesty. And yet not even a bloodwrung

—not to say an immodest—defection does the "infirmity of the flesh" excuse!

Chapter XVI.

But I smile when the plea of "infirmity of the flesh" is advanced in opposition to us: infirmity which is rather to be called the height of strength. Iteration of marriage is an affair of strength: to rise again from the case of continence to the works of the flesh is a thing requiring substantial reins. Such "infirmity" is equal to a third, and a fourth, and perhaps a seventh marriage; as being a thing which increases in strength as often as its weakness; which will no longer have the support of an apostle's authority, but of some Hermogenes —wont to marry more women than he paints. . . . What if a man allege "indigence," so as to profess that his flesh is openly prostituted, and given in marriage for the sake of maintenance; forgetting that there is to be no careful thought about food and clothing? He has God to look to, the Foster-father even of ravens, the Rearer even of flowers. What if a man thinks on posterity, with thoughts like the eyes of Lot's wife; so that a man is to make the fact that from his former marriage he has had no children a reason for repeating marriage? A Christian, forsooth, will seek heirs, disinherited as he is from the entire world! He has "brethren"; he has the Church as his mother. The case is different if men believe that, at the bar of Christ as well as of Rome, action is taken on the principle of the Julian laws; and imagine that the unmarried and childless cannot receive their portion in full, in accordance with the testament of God. Let such as thus think, marry to the very end; that in this confusion of flesh they, like Sodom and Gomorrha, and the day of the deluge, may be overtaken by the fatal final end of the world. A third saying let them add: "Let us eat, and drink, *and marry*, for to-morrow we shall die"; not reflecting that the "woe" denounced "on such as are with child, and are giving suck," will fall far more heavily and bitterly in the "universal shaking" of the entire world than it did in the devastation of one fraction of Judæa. Let them accumulate by their iterated marriages fruits right seasonable for the last times—breasts heaving, and wombs qualmish, and infants whimpering.

Let them prepare for Antichrist children upon whom he may more passionately than Pharaoh spend his savagery. He will lead to them murderous midwives.

CHAPTER XVII.—"*Heathen examples cry shame upon this infirmity of the flesh.*"

They will have plainly a specious privilege to plead before Christ—the everlasting "infirmity of the flesh!" But upon this infirmity will sit in judgement no longer an Isaac, our monogamist father; or a John, a noted celibate of Christ's; or a Judith, daughter of Merari; or so many other examples of saints. Heathen are wont to be destined our judges. There will arise a Queen of Carthage, and give sentence upon the Christians, who, refugee as she was, living on alien soil, and at that very time the originator of so mighty a state, whereas she ought unasked to have craved royal nuptials, yet for fear she should experience a second marriage, preferred on the contrary rather to "burn" than to "marry." Her assessor will be the Roman matron who, having—albeit it was through nocturnal violence, nevertheless—known another man, washed away with blood the stain of her flesh, that she might avenge upon her own person the honour of monogamy. . . . To idols, at all events, both monogamy and widowhood serve as apparitors. On Fortuna Muliebris, as on Mother Matuta, none but a once wedded woman hangs the wreath. Once for all do the Pontifex Maximus and the wife of a Flamen marry. The priestesses of Ceres, even during the lifetime and with the consent of their husbands, are widowed by amicable separation!

Blush, O flesh, who hast "put on" Christ! Suffice it thee once for all to marry, whereto "from the beginning" thou wast created, whereto by "the end" thou art being recalled! Return at least to the former Adam, if to the last thou canst not! Once for all did he taste of the tree; once for all felt concupiscence; once for all veiled his shame; once for all blushed in the presence of God; once for all concealed his guilty hue; once for all was exiled from the paradise of holiness; once for all thenceforward married. If you were "in him," you have your norm; if you have passed over "into Christ," you will be bound to be yet better. Exhibit

to us a third Adam, and him twice married ; and then you will be able to be what, between the two, you cannot.

From "On Modesty."

I hear that there has been an edict set forth, and a peremptory one too. The sovereign Pontiff—that is, the bishop of bishops (Pope Zephyrinus)—issues an edict : "I remit, to such as have discharged the requirements of repentance, the sins both of adultery and fornication." O edict, on which cannot be inscribed, "Good deed!" And where shall this liberality be posted up? On the very spot, I suppose, on the very gates of the sensual appetites, beneath the very titles of the sensual appetites. There is the place for promulgating such repentance, where the delinquency itself shall haunt. There is the place to read the pardon, where entrance shall be made under the hope thereof. But it is in *The Church* that this edict is read, and in the church that it is pronounced : and *The Church* is a virgin! Far, far from Christ's betrothed be such a proclamation. She, the true, the modest, the saintly, shall be free from stain even of her ears. She has none to whom to make such a promise ; and if she have had, she does not make it ; since even the earthly temple of God can sooner have been called by the Lord a "den of robbers," than of adulterers and fornicators.

By us . . . it is not permitted, after believing, to know even a second marriage, differentiated though it be, to be sure, from the work of adultery and fornication by the nuptial and dotal tablets : and accordingly, with the utmost strictness, we excommunicate the twice-married, as bringing infamy upon the Paraclete by the irregularity of their discipline.

If any precedents taken from the Old Dispensation shall favour you in the secrecy of your bosom, they shall not be set in opposition to this discipline which we are maintaining. For it is in vain that an additional law has been reared, condemning the *origin* even of sins,—that is concupiscences and wills—no less than the actual deeds ; if the fact that pardon was of old in some cases conceded to adultery is to be a reason why it shall be conceded at the present day. . . . In that case ,

you will grant pardon to the idolater too, and to every apostate, because we find the People itself, so often guilty of these crimes, as often reinstated in their former privileges. You will maintain communion, too, with the murderer: because Ahab, by deprecation, washed away the guilt of Naboth's blood; and David, by confession, purged Uriah's slaughter, together with its cause -adultery. That done, you will condone incests, too, for Lot's sake; and fornications combined with incest, for Judah's sake; and base marriages with prostitutes, for Hosea's sake; and not only the frequent repetition of marriage, but its simultaneous plurality (polygamy) for our fathers' sake. . . . But, with an eye to the glory of Christ I prefer to derive my discipline from Christ.

Conclusion.

The above extracts from Tertullian, lead to the following conclusions:

1. The early Christian Church in Africa maintained a standard of Church discipline, more severe than that insisted upon to-day.

2. Not only were polygamists not admitted to Church Membership but a Christian lapsing into polygamy was excommunicated, and even a man marrying again after the death of his wife was treated in the same way.

3. This discipline was not received from Europe, but was Eastern in origin, and was more severe than the discipline in the Roman Church of that time. Africa was strict; Europe was lax.

4. The African Church refused to lower its standard of discipline to conform to the laxity of the Roman Christian Church, and Tertullian opposed the Roman Pontiff because of the low standard of morality he permitted.

Therefore, those Christian Churches in Africa to-day, which hold to the highest ideals of life, which maintain the purest discipline, and which will not tolerate a manner of living unworthy of Christ, are in communion with the African Christian Church of the third century, and are members of the true Catholic Church. People who say that the custom of polygamy is a matter quite apart from religion, and that

the refusal to baptise polygamists is purely a European fancy introduced into Africa by Europeans, have history disproving absolutely their statements, and proving the reverse to be the case. *When England was a polygamous and heathen country, the Christian Church in Africa refused Church Membership to polygamists, and excommunicated those who lapsed into polygamy.* The writings of Tertullian prove that statements to the contrary are simply not true.

THE END

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